

HORTUS INCLUSUS.

HORTUS INCLUSUS.

*MESSAGES FROM THE WOOD TO
THE GARDEN,*

SENT IN HAPPY DAYS TO THE
SISTER LADIES OF THE THWAITE, CONISTON,

BY THEIR THANKFUL FRIEND
JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.



GEORGE ALLEN,
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.
1887.

[All rights reserved.]

Printed by Hazell, Watson, & Viney, Ltd., London and Aylesbury.

DEDICATED

WITH GRATEFUL THANKS TO MY DEAR FRIENDS

PROFESSOR RUSKIN

AND

ALBERT FLEMING.

S. B.

P R E F A C E .

THE ladies to whom these letters were written have been, throughout their brightly tranquil lives, at once sources and loadstones of all good to the village in which they had their home, and to all loving people who cared for the village and its vale and secluded lake, and whatever remained in them or around of the former peace, beauty, and pride of English Shepherd Land.

Sources they have been of good, like one of its mountain springs, ever to be found at need. They did not travel; they did not go up to London in its season; they did not receive idle visitors to jar or waste their leisure

in the waning year. The poor and the sick could find them always; or rather, they watched for and prevented all poverty and pain that care or tenderness could relieve or heal. Loadstones they were, as steadily bringing the light of gentle and wise souls about them as the crest of their guardian mountain gives pause to the morning clouds: in themselves, they were types of perfect womanhood in its constant happiness, queens alike of their own hearts and of a Paradise in which they knew the names and sympathized with the spirits of every living creature that God had made to play therein, or to blossom in its sunshine or shade.

They had lost their dearly-loved younger sister, Margaret, before I knew them. Mary and Susie, alike in benevolence, serenity, and practical judgment, were yet widely different, nay, almost contrary, in tone and impulse of intellect. Both of them capable of understand-

ing whatever women should know, the elder was yet chiefly interested in the course of immediate English business, policy, and progressive science, while Susie lived an aerial and enchanted life, possessing all the highest joys of imagination, while she yielded to none of its deceits, sicknesses, or errors. She saw, and felt, and believed all good, as it had ever been, and was to be, in the reality and eternity of its goodness, with the acceptance and the hope of a child ; the least things were treasures to her, and her moments fuller of joy than some people's days.

What she has been to me, in the days and years when other friendship has been failing, and others' "loving, mere folly," the reader will enough see from these letters, written certainly for her only, but from which she has permitted my Master of the Rural Industries at Loughrigg, Albert Fleming, to choose what he thinks, among the tendrils of clinging

thought, and mossy cups for dew in the Garden of Herbs where Love is, may be trusted to the memorial sympathy of the readers of "Frondes Agrestes."

J. R.

BRANTWOOD,

June, 1887.

INTRODUCTION.

OFTEN during those visits to the Thwaite which have grown to be the best-spent hours of my later years, I have urged my dear friend Miss Beever to open to the larger world the pleasant paths of this her Garden Enclosed. The inner circle of her friends knew that she had a goodly store of Mr. Ruskin's letters, extending over many years. She for her part had long desired to share with others the pleasure these letters had given her, but she shrank from the fatigue of selecting and arranging them. It was, therefore, with no small feeling of satisfaction that I drove home from the Thwaite one day in February last with a parcel containing nearly two thousand of these treasured letters. I was gladdened also by generous permission, both from Brantwood and the Thwaite, to choose what I liked best for

publication. The letters themselves are the fruit of the most beautiful friendship I have ever been permitted to witness, a friendship so unique in some aspects of it, so sacred in all, that I may only give it the praise of silence. I count myself happy to have been allowed to throw open to all wise and quiet souls the portals of this Armida's Garden, where there are no spells save those woven by love, and no magic save that of grace and kindness. Here my pleasant share in this little book would have ended, but Mr. Ruskin has desired me to add a few words, giving my own description of Susie, and speaking of my relationship to them both. To him I owe the guidance of my life, —all its best impulses, all its worthiest efforts; to her some of its happiest hours, and the blessings alike of incentive and reproof. In reading over Mr. Ruskin's Preface, I note that, either by grace of purpose or happy chance, he has left me one point untouched in our dear friend's character. Her letters inserted here give some evidence of it, but I should like to place on record how her intense delight in sweet and simple things has blossomed into a kind of mental frolic and dainty

wit, so that even now in the calm autumn of her days, her friends are not only lessoned by her ripened wisdom, but cheered and recreated by her quaint and sprightly humour.

In the Royal Order of Gardens, as Bacon puts it, there was always a quiet resting-place called the Pleasaunce; there the daisies grew unchecked, and the grass was ever the greenest. Such a Pleasaunce do these Letters seem to me. Here and there, indeed, there are shadows on the grass, but no shadow ever falls between the two dear friends who walk together hand in hand along its pleasant paths. So may they walk in peace till they stand at the gate of another Garden, where

“Co’ fiori eterni, eterno il frutto dura.”

A. F.

NEAUM CRAG,
LOUGHRIGG,
AMBLESIDE.

HORTUS INCLUSUS.

THE SACRISTAN'S CELL.

ASSISI, 14th April, 1874.

I got to-day your lovely letter of the 6th, but I never knew my Susie *could* be such a naughty little girl before ; to burn her pretty story * instead of sending it to me. It would have come to me so exactly in the right place here, where St. Francis made the grasshopper (cicada, at least) sing to him upon his hand, and preached to the birds, and made the wolf go its rounds every day as regularly as any Franciscan friar, to ask for a little contribution to its modest dinner. The Bee and Narcissus would have delighted to talk in this enchanted air.

Yes, that *is* really very pretty of Dr. John

†

* "The Bee and Narcissus."

to inscribe your books so, and it's so like him. How these kind people understand things! And that bit of his about the child is wholly lovely; I am so glad you copied it.

I often think of you, and of Coniston and Brantwood. You will see, in the May Fors, reflections upon the temptations to the life of a Franciscan.

There are two monks here, one the sacristan who has charge of the entire church, and is responsible for its treasures; the other exercising what authority is left to the convent among the people of the town. They are both so good and innocent and sweet, one can't pity them enough. For this time in Italy is just like the Reformation in Scotland, with only the difference that the Reform movement is carried on here simply for the sake of what money can be got by Church confiscation. And these two brothers are living by indulgence, as the Abbot in the Monastery of St. Mary's in the Regent Moray's time.

The people of the village, however, are all true to their faith; it is only the governing body which is modern-infidel and radical. The population is quite charming,—a word of kind-

ness makes them as bright as if you brought them news of a friend. All the same, it does not do to offend them ; Monsieur Cavalcasella, who is expecting the Government order to take the Tabernacle from the Sanctuary of St. Francis, cannot, it is said, go out at night with safety. He decamped the day before I came, having some notion, I fancy, that I would make his life a burden to him, if he didn't, by day, as much as it was in peril by night. I promise myself a month of very happy time here (happy for *me*, I mean) when I return in May.

The sacristan gives me my coffee for lunch, in his own little cell, looking out on the olive woods ; then he tells me stories of conversions and miracles, and then perhaps we go into the Sacristy and have a reverent little poke out of relics. Fancy a great carved cupboard in a vaulted chamber full of most precious things (the box which the Holy Virgin's veil used to be kept in, to begin with), and leave to rummage in it at will ! Things that are only shown twice in the year or so, with fumigation ! all the congregation on their knees ; and the sacristan and I having a great heap of them

on the table at once, like a dinner service ! I really looked with great respect at St. Francis's old camel-hair dress.

I am obliged to go to Rome to-morrow, however, and to Naples on Saturday. My witch of Sicily* expects me this day week, and she's going to take me such lovely drives, and talks of "excursions" which I see by the map are thirty miles away. I wonder if she thinks me so horribly old that it's quite proper. It will be very nice if she does, but not flattering. I know her mother can't go with her, I suppose her maid will. If she wants any other chaperone I won't go.

She's really very beautiful, I believe, to some people's tastes, (I shall be horribly disappointed if she isn't, in her own dark style,) and she writes, next to Susie, the loveliest letters I ever get.

Now, Susie, mind, you're to be a very good child while I'm away, and never to burn any more stories ; and above all, you're to write me just what comes into your head, and ever to believe me your loving

J. R.

* Miss Amy Yule. See "Præterita," Vol. III., Chap. vii.

NAPLES, *2nd May*, 1874.

I heard of your great sorrow * from Joan † six days ago, and have not been able to write since. Nothing silences me so much as sorrow, and for this of yours I have no comfort. I write only that you may know that I am thinking of you, and would help you if I could. And I write to-day because your lovely letters and your lovely old age have been forced into my thoughts often by dreadful contrast during these days in Italy. You who are so purely and brightly happy in all natural and simple things, seem now to belong to another and a younger world. And your letters have been to me like the pure air of Yewdale Crag breathed among the Pontine Marshes; but you must not think I am ungrateful for them when I can't answer. You can have no idea how impossible it is for me to do all the work necessary even for memory of the things I came here to see; how much escapes me, how much is done in a broken and weary way. I am the only author on art who does the work of illus-

* The death of Miss Margaret Beever.

† Mrs. Arthur Severn.

tration with his own hand; the only one therefore—and I am not insolent in saying this—who has learned his business thoroughly; but after a day's drawing I assure you one cannot sit down to write unless it be the merest nonsense to please Joanie. Believe it or not, there is no one of my friends whom I write so scrupulously to as to you. You may be vexed at this, but indeed I can't but try to write carefully in answer to all your kind words, and so sometimes I can't at all. I *must* tell you, however, to-day, what I saw in the Pompeian frescoes—the great characteristic of falling Rome, in her furious desire of pleasure, and brutal incapability of it. The walls of Pompeii are covered with paintings meant only to give pleasure, but nothing they represent is beautiful or delightful, and yesterday, among other calumniated and caricatured birds, I saw one of my Susie's pets, a peacock; and he had only eleven eyes in his tail. Fancy the feverish wretchedness of the humanity which in mere pursuit of pleasure or power had reduced itself to see no more than eleven eyes in a peacock's tail! What were the Cyclops to this?

I hope to get to Rome this evening, and to be there settled for some time, and to have quieter hours for my letters.

ROME, 23rd May, 1874.

A number of business letters and the increasing instinct for work here as time shortens, have kept me too long from even writing a mere mama-note to you ; though not without thought of you daily.

I have your last most lovely line about your sister—and giving me that most touching fact about poor Dr. John Brown, which I am grieved and yet thankful to know, that I may better still reverence his unfailing kindness and quick sympathy. I have a quite wonderful letter from him about you ; but I will not tell you what he says, only it is so *very*, very true, and so very, very pretty, you can't think.

I have written to my bookseller to find for you, and send a complete edition of "Modern Painters," if findable. If not, I will make my assistant send you down my own fourth and fifth volumes, which you can keep till I come for them in the autumn.

There is nothing now in the year but autumn and winter. I really begin to think there is some terrible change of climate coming upon the world for its sin, like another deluge. It will have its rainbow, I suppose, after its manner—promising not to darken the world again, and then not to drown.

ROME, 24th May, 1874. (*Whit-Sunday.*)

I have to-day, to make the day whiter for me, your lovely letter of the 14th, telling me your age. I am so glad it is no more ; you are only thirteen years older than I, and much more able to be my sister than mamma, and I hope you will have many years of youth yet. I think I *must* tell you in return for this letter what Dr. John Brown said, or part of it at least. He said you had the playfulness of a lamb without its selfishness. I think that perfect as far as it goes. Of course my Susie's wise and grave gifts must be told of afterwards. There is no one I know, or have known, so well able as you are to be in a degree what my mother was to me. In this chief way (as well as many other ways) (the puzzlement I have had

to force that sentence into grammar!), that I have had the same certainty of giving you pleasure by a few words and by any little account of what I am doing. But then you know I have just got out of the way of doing as I am bid, and unless you can scold me back into that, you can't give me the sense of support.

Tell me more about yourself first, and how those years came to be "lost." I am not sure that they were; though I am very far from holding the empty theory of compensation; but much of the slighter pleasure you lost then is evidently still open to you, fresh all the more from having been for a time withdrawn.

The Roman peasants are very gay to-day, with roses in their hair; legitimately and honourably decorated, and looking lovely. Oh me, if they had a few Susies to take human care of them what a glorious people they would be!

THE LOST CHURCH IN THE CAMPAGNA.

ROME, *2nd June*, 1874.

Ah if you were but among the marbles here,

though there are none finer than that you so strangely discerned in my study ; but they are as a white company innumerable, ghost after ghost. And how you would rejoice in them and in a thousand things besides, to which I am dead, from having seen too much or worked too painfully—or, worst of all, lost the hope which gives all life.

Last Sunday I was in a lost church found again,—a church of the second or third century, dug in a green hill of the Campagna, built underground ;—its secret entrance like a sand-martin's nest. Such the temple of the Lord, as the King Solomon of that time had to build it ; not “the mountains of the Lord's house shall be established above the hills,” but the cave of the Lord's house as the fox's hole, beneath them.

And here, now lighted by the sun for the first time (for they are still digging the earth from the steps), are the marbles of those early Christian days ; the first efforts of their new hope to show itself in enduring record, the new hope of a Good Shepherd :—there they carved Him, with a spring flowing at His feet, and round Him the cattle of the Campagna in

which they had dug their church, the very selfsame goats which this morning have been trotting past my window through the most populous streets of Rome, innocently following their shepherd, tinkling their bells, and shaking their long spiral horns and white beards; the very same dew-lapped cattle which were that Sunday morning feeding on the hillside above, carved on the tomb-marbles sixteen hundred years ago.

How you would have liked to see it, Susie!

And now to-day I am going to work in an eleventh century church of quite proud and victorious Christianity, with its grand bishops and saints lording it over Italy. The bishop's throne all marble and mosaic of precious colours and of gold, high under the vaulted roof at the end behind the altar; and line upon line of pillars of massive porphyry and marble, gathered out of the ruins of the temples of the great race who had persecuted them, till they had said to the hills, Cover us, like the wicked. And then *their* proud time came, and their enthronement on the seven hills; and now, what is to be their fate once more? —of pope and cardinal and dome, Peter's or

Paul's by name only,—“My house, no more a house of prayer, but a den of thieves.”

I can't write any more this morning. Oh me, if one could only write and draw all one wanted, and have our Susies and be young again, oneself and they! (As if there were two Susies, or *could* be!)

Ever my one Susie's very loving

J. RUSKIN.

I have sent word to my father's old head-clerk, now a great merchant himself, to send you a little case of that champagne. Please like it.

REGRETS.

ASSISI, *June 9th.*

Yes, I am a little oppressed just now with overwork, nor is this avoidable. I am obliged to leave all my drawings unfinished as the last days come, and the point possible of approximate completion fatally contracts, every hour to a more ludicrous and warped mockery of the hope in which one began. It is impossible not to work against time, and *that* is killing.

It is not labour itself, but competitive, anxious, disappointed labour that dries one's soul out.

But don't be frightened about me, you sweet Susie. I know when I *must* stop; forgive and pity me only, because sometimes, nay often my letter (or word) to Susie must be sacrificed to the last effort on one's drawing.

The letter to one's Susie should be a rest, do you think? It is always more or less comforting, but not rest; it means further employment of the already extremely strained sensational power. What one really wants! I believe the only true restorative is the natural one, the actual presence of one's "helpmeet." The far worse than absence of mine *reverses* rest, and what is more, destroys one's power of receiving from others or giving.

How much love of mine have *others* lost, because that poor sick child would not have the part of love that belonged to her!

I am very anxious about your eyes too. For any favour don't write more extracts just now. The books are yours for ever and a day—no 'loan; enjoy any bits that you find enjoyable, but don't copy just now.

I left Rome yesterday, and am on my way

home ; but, alas ! might as well be on my way home from Cochin China, for any chance I have of speedily arriving. Meantime your letters will reach me here with speed, and will be a great comfort to me, if they don't fatigue *you*.

"FRONDES AGRESTES."

PERUGIA, 12th June.

I am more and more pleased at the thought of this gathering of yours, and soon expect to tell you what the bookseller says.

Meantime I want you to think of the form the collection should take with reference to my proposed re-publication. I mean to take the botany, the geology, the Turner defence, and the general art criticism of "Modern Painters," as four separate books, cutting out nearly all the preaching, and a good deal of the sentiment. Now what you find pleasant and helpful to you of general maxim or reflection, *must* be of some value ; and I think therefore that your selection will just do for me what no other reader could have done, least of all I myself ; keep together, that is to say, what

may be right and true of those youthful thoughts. I should like you to add anything that specially pleases you, of whatever kind; but to keep the notion of your book being the didactic one as opposed to the other picturesque and scientific volumes, will I think help you in choosing between passages when one or other is to be rejected.

HOW I FELL AMONG THIEVES.

ASSISI, 17th June.

I have been having a bad time lately, and have no heart to write to you. Very difficult and melancholy work, deciphering what remains of a great painter among stains of ruin and blotches of repair, of five hundred years' gathering. It makes me sadder than idleness, which is saying much.

I was greatly flattered and petted by a saying in one of your last letters, about the difficulty I had in unpacking my mind. That is true; one of my chief troubles at present is with the quantity of things I want to say at once. But you don't know how I find things I laid by carefully in it, all mouldy

and moth-eaten when I take them out ; and what a lot of mending and airing they need, and what a wearisome and bothering business it is compared to the early packing,—one used to be so proud to get things into the corners neatly !

I have been failing in my drawings, too, and I'm in a horrible inn kept by a Garibaldian bandit ; and the various sorts of disgusting dishes sent up to look like a dinner, and to be charged for, are a daily increasing horror and amazement to me. They succeed in getting *everything* bad ; no exertion, no invention, could produce such badness, I believe, anywhere else. The hills are covered for leagues with olive trees, and the oil's bad ; there are no such lovely cattle elsewhere in the world, and the butter's bad ; half the country people are shepherds, but there's no mutton ; half the old women walk about with a pig tied to their waists, but there's no pork ; the vine grows wild anywhere, and the wine would make my teeth drop out of my head if I took a glass of it ; there are no strawberries, no oranges, no melons, the cherries are as hard as their stones, the beans only

good for horses, or Jack and the beanstalk, and this is the size of the biggest asparagus—



I live here in a narrow street ten feet wide only, winding up a hill, and it was full this morning of sheep as close as they could pack, at least a thousand, as far as the eye could reach,—tinkle tinkle, bleat bleat, for a quarter of an hour.

IN PARADISE.

ASSISI, SACRISTAN'S CELL,

25th June.

This letter is all upside down, and this first page written last; for I didn't like something I had written about myself last night when I was tired, and have torn it off.

That star you saw beat like a heart must have been a dog star. A planet would not have twinkled. Far mightier, he, than any planet; burning with his own planetary host doubtless round him; and, on some speckiest

of the specks of them, evangelical persons thinking our sun was made for *them*.

Ah, Susie, I do not pass, unthought of, the many sorrows of which you kindly tell me, to show me—for that is in your heart—how others have suffered also.

But, Susie, *you* expect to see your Margaret again, and you will be happy with her in heaven. I wanted my Rosie *here*. In heaven I mean to go and talk to Pythagoras and Socrates and Valerius Publicola. I shan't care a bit for Rosie there, she needn't think it. What will grey eyes and red cheeks be good for *there*?

These pious sentiments are all written in my sacristan's cell.

Now, Susie, mind, though you're only eight years old, you must try to fancy you're ten or eleven, and attend to what I say.

This extract book * of yours will be most precious in its help to me, provided it is kept within somewhat narrow limits. As soon as it is done I mean to have it published in a strong and pretty but *cheap* form, and it must not be too bulky. Consider, therefore, not

* "Frondes Agrestes."

only what you like, but how far and with whom each bit is likely to find consent and service. You will have to choose perhaps, after a little while, among what you have already chosen. I mean to leave it *wholly* in your hands; it is to be Susie's choice of my writings.

Don't get into a flurry of responsibility, but don't at once write down all you have a mind to; I know you'll find a good deal! for you are exactly in sympathy with me in all things.

ASSISI, 9th July, 1874.

Your lovely letters are always a comfort to me; and not least when you tell me you are sad. You would be far less in sympathy with me if you were not, and in the "everything right" humour of some, even of some really good and kind persons, whose own matters are to their mind, and who understand by "Providence" the power which particularly takes care of *them*. This favouritism which goes so sweetly and pleasantly down with so many pious people is the chief of all stumbling-blocks to *me*. I must pray for everybody or nobody, and can't get into any conceptions of relation

between Heaven and *me*, if not also between Heaven and earth, (and why Heaven should allow hairs in pens I can't think).

I take great care of myself, be quite sure of that, Susie ; the worst of it is, here in Assisi everybody else wants me to take care of them.

Catharine brought me up as a great treat yesterday at dinner, ham dressed with as much garlic as could be stewed into it, and a plate of raw figs, telling me I was to eat them together !

The sun is changing the entire mountains of Assisi into a hot bottle with no flannel round it ; but I can't get a ripe plum, peach, or cherry. All the milk turns sour, and one has to eat one's meat at its toughest or the thunder gets into it next day.

FOAM OF TIBER.

PERUGIA, 17th July.

I am made anxious by your sweet letter of the 6th saying you have been ill and are "not much better."

The letter is all like yours, but I suppose however ill you were you would always write prettily, so that's little comfort.

About the Narcissus, please. I want them for my fishpond stream rather than for the bee-house one. The fishpond stream is very doleful, and wants to dance with daffodils if they would come and teach it. How happy we are in our native streams! A thunderstorm swelled the Tiber yesterday, and it rolled over its mill weirs in heaps, literally, of tossed water, the size of haycocks, but black brown like coffee with the grounds in it, mixed with a very little yellow milk. In some lights the foam flew like cast handfuls of heavy gravel. The chief flowers here are only broom and bindweed, and I begin to weary for my heather and for my Susie; but oh dear, the ways are long and the days few.

LUCCA, 29th July.

I'm not going to be devoured when I come, by anybody, unless *you* like to. I shall come to your window with the birds, to be fed myself.

And please at present always complain to me whenever you like. It is the over boisterous cheerfulness of common people that hurts me; your sadness is a help to me.

You shall have whatever name you like for your book provided you continue to like it after thinking over it long enough. You will not like "Gleanings," because you know one only gleans refuse—dropped ears—that other people don't care for. *You* go into the garden and gather with choice the flowers you like best. That is not gleaning!

LUCCA, 10th August.

I have been grieved not to write to you ; but the number of things that vex me are so great just now, that unless by false effort I could write you nothing nice. It is very dreadful to live in Italy, and more dreadful to see one's England and one's English friends, all but a field or two, and a stream or two, and a one Susie and one Dr. Brown, fast becoming like Italy and the Italians.

I have too *much sympathy* with your sorrow to write to you of it. What I have not sympathy with, is your hope ; and how cruel it is to say this ! But I am driven more and more to think there is to be no more good for a time, but a reign of terror of men and the

elements alike ; and yet it is so like what is foretold before the coming of the Son of man that perhaps in the extremest evil of it I may some day read the sign that our redemption draws nigh.

Now, Susie, invent a nice cluster of titles for the book and send them to me to choose from, to Hotel de l'Arno, Florence. I must get that out before the day of judgment, if I can. I'm so glad of your sweet flatteries in this note received to-day.

FLORENCE, 25th August.

I have not been able to write to you, or anyone lately, whom I don't want to tease, except Dr. Brown, whom I write to for counsel. My time is passed in a fierce steady struggle to save all I can every day, as a fireman from a smouldering ruin, of history or aspect. To-day, for instance, I've been just in time to ascertain the form of the cross of the Emperor, representing the power of the State in the greatest *political* fresco of old times—fourteenth century. By next year, it may be next month, it will have dropped from the wall

with the vibration of the railway outside, and be touched up with new gilding for the mob.

I am keeping well, but am in a terrible spell (literally, "spell," enchanted maze, that I can't get out of) of work.

I *was* a little scandalized at the idea of your calling the book "word painting." My dearest Susie, it is the chief provocation of my life to be called a "word painter" instead of a thinker. I hope you haven't filled your book with descriptions. I thought it was the thoughts you were looking for?

"Posie" would be pretty. If you ask Joanie she will tell you perhaps *too* pretty for *me*, and I can't think a bit to-night, for instead of robins singing I hear only blaspheming gamesters on the other side of the narrow street.

FLORENCE, 1st September.

Don't be in despair about your book. I am sure it will be lovely. I'll see to it the moment I get home, but I've got into an entirely unexpected piece of business here, the interpretation of a large chapel full of mis-

understood, or not at all understood, frescoes ; and I'm terribly afraid of breaking down, so much drawing has to be done at the same time. It has stranded botany and everything.

I was kept awake half of last night by drunken blackguards howling on the bridge of the Holy Trinity in the pure half-moonlight. This is the kind of discord I have to bear, corresponding to your uncongenial company. But, alas ! Susie, you ought at ten years old to have more firmness, and to resolve that you won't be bored. I think I shall try to enforce it on you as a very solemn duty not to *lie* to people as the vulgar public do. If they bore you, say so, and they'll go away. That is the right state of things.

How am I to know that *I* don't bore you, when *I* come, when you're so civil to people you hate ?

PASS OF BOCCHETTA, 1st October.

* * * * *

All that is lovely and wonderful in the Alps may be seen without the slightest danger, in general, and it is especially good for little

girls of eleven who can't climb, to know this—all the best views of hills are at the bottom of them. I know one or two places indeed where there is a grand peeping over precipices, one or two where the mountain seclusion and strength are worth climbing to see. But all the entirely beautiful things I could show you, Susie ; only for the very highest sublime of them sometimes asking you to endure half an hour of *chaise à porteur*, but mostly from a post-chaise or smoothest of turnpike roads.

But, Susie, do you know, I'm greatly horrified at the penwipers of peacocks' feathers ! I always use my left-hand coat tail, indeed, and if only I were a peacock and a pet of yours, how you'd scold me !

Sun just coming out over sea (at Sestri), which is sighing in towards the window, within your drive, round before the door's breadth of it, * seen between two masses of acacia copse and two orange trees at the side of the inn courtyard.

* That is, within that distance of the window.

GENEVA, 19th October.

How I have been neglecting you ! Perhaps Joanie may have told you that just at my last gasp of hand-work, I had to write quite an unexpected number of letters. But poor Joanie will think herself neglected now, for I have been stopped among the Alps by a state of their glaciers entirely unexampled, and shall be a week after my "latest possible" day, in getting home. It is eleven years since I was here, and very sad to me to return, yet delightful with a moonlight paleness of the past, precious of its kind.

I shall be at home with Joan in ten days now, God willing. I have much to tell you, which will give you pleasure and pain ; but I don't know how much it will be—to tell you—for a little while yet, so I don't begin.

OXFORD, 26th October.

Home at last with your lovely, most lovely, letter in my breast pocket, from Joan's all the way here.

I am so very grateful to you for not writing on black paper.

Oh, dear Susie, why should we ever wear black for the guests of God ?

WHARFE IN FLOOD.

BOLTON ABBEY,

24th January, 1875.

THE black rain, much as I growled at it, has let me see Wharfe in flood ; and I would have borne many days in prison to see that.

No one need go to the Alps to see wild water. Seldom unless in the Rhine or Rhone themselves at their rapids, have I seen anything much grander. An Alpine stream, besides, nearly always has its bed full of loose stones, and becomes a series of humps and dumps of water wherever it is shallow ; while the Wharfe swept round its curves of shore like a black Damascus sabre, coiled into eddies of steel. At the Strid, it had risen eight feet vertical since yesterday, sheeting the flat rocks with foam from side to side, while the treacherous mid-channel was filled with a succession of boiling domes of water, charged through and through with churning white, and rolling out

into the broader stream, each like a vast sea wave bursting on a beach.

There is something in the soft and comparatively unbroken slopes of these Yorkshire shales which must give the water a peculiar sweeping power, for I have seen Tay and Tummel and Ness, and many a big stream besides, savage enough, but I don't remember anything so grim as this.

I came home to quiet tea and a black kitten called Sweep, who lapped half my cream jugful (and yet I had plenty) sitting on my shoulder,—and *Life of Sir Walter Scott*. I was reading his great Scottish history tour, when he was twenty-three, and got his materials for everything nearly, but especially for *Waverley*, though not used till long afterwards.

Do you recollect Gibbie Gellatly? I was thinking over that question of yours, "What did I think?"* But, my dear Susie, you might as well ask Gibbie Gellatly what *he* thought. What does it matter what any of us think? We are but simpletons, the best of us, and I am a very inconsistent and wayward simpleton. I know how to roast eggs, in the ashes, perhaps

* Of the things that shall be, hereafter.

—but for the next world! Why don't you ask your squirrel what *he* thinks too? The great point—the one for all of us—is, not to take false words in our mouths, and to crack our nuts innocently through winter and rough weather.

I shall post this to-morrow as I pass through Skipton or any post-worthy place on my way to Wakefield. Write to Warwick. Oh me, what places England had, when she was herself! Now, rail stations mostly. But I never can make out how Warwick Castle got built by that dull bit of river.

“FRONDES.”

WAKEFIELD, 25th January, 1875.

Here's our book in form at last, and it seems to me just a nice size, and on the whole very taking. I've put a touch or two more to the preface, and I'm sadly afraid there's a naughty note somewhere. I hope you won't find it, and that you will like the order the things are put in.

Such ill roads as we came over to-day, I never thought to see in England.

CASTLETON, 26th January, 1875.

Here I have your long dear letter. I am very thankful I can be so much to you. Of all the people I have yet known, you are the only one I can find complete sympathy in ; you are so nice and young without the hardness of youth, and may be the best of sisters to me. I am not so sure about letting you be an elder one ; I am not going to be lectured when I'm naughty.

I've been so busy at *wasps* all day coming along, having got a nice book about them. It tells me, too, of a delightful German doctor who kept tame hornets,—a whole nest in his study ! They knew him perfectly, and would let him do anything with them, even pull bits off their nest to look in at it.

Wasps, too, my author says, are really much more amiable than bees, and never get angry without cause. All the same, they have a tiresome way of inspecting one, too closely, sometimes, I think.

I'm immensely struck with the Peak Cavern, but it was in twilight.

I'm going to stay here all to-morrow, the place is so entirely unspoiled. I've not seen

such a primitive village, rock, or stream, this twenty years; Langdale is as sophisticated as Pall Mall in comparison.

Alas, I've other letters to write!

WASP STINGS.

BOLTON BRIDGE, *Saturday*.

I never was more thankful than for your sweet note, being stopped here by bad weather again; the worst of posting is that one has to think of one's servant outside, and so lose a day.

It was bitter wind and snow this morning, too bad to send any human creature to sit idle in. Black enough still, and I more than usual, because it is just that point of distinction from brutes which I truly say is our only one,* of which I have now so little hold.

The bee Fors † will be got quickly into proof, but I must add a good deal to it. I can't get into good humour for natural history in this weather.

I've got a good book on wasps which says

* I've forgotten what it was, and don't feel now as if I had 'got hold' of *any* one.

† See "Fors Clavigera," Letter LI.

they are our chief protectors against flies. In Cumberland the wet cold spring is so bad for the wasps that I partly think this may be so, and the terrible plague of flies in August might perhaps be checked by our teaching our little Agneses to keep wasps' nests instead of bees.

Yes, that is a pretty bit of mine about Hamlet, and I think I must surely be a little pathetic sometimes, in a doggish way.

"You're so dreadfully faithful!" said Arthur Severn to me, fretting over the way I was being ill-treated the other day by R.

Oh dear, I wish I were at Brantwood again, now, and could send you my wasp book! *It* is pathetic, and yet so dreadful,—the wasp bringing in the caterpillar for its young wasp, stinging each enough to paralyse but not to kill, and so laying them up in the cupboard.

I wonder how the clergymen's wives will feel after the next Fors or two! I've done a bit to-day which I think will go in with a shiver. Do you recollect the curious *thrill* there is—the cold *tingle* of the pang of a nice deep wasp sting?

Well, I'm not in a fit temper to write to Susie to-day, clearly.

BOLTON STRID.

I stopped here to see the Strid again—not seen these many years. It is curious that life is embittered to me, now, by its former pleasantness ; while *you* have of these same places painful recollections, but you could enjoy them now with your whole heart.

Instead of the drive with the poor overlaboured one horse through the long wet day, here, when I was a youth, my father and mother brought me, and let me sketch in the Abbey and ramble in the woods as I chose, only demanding promise that I should not go near the Strid. Pleasant drives, with, on the whole, well paid and pleased drivers, never with over-burdened cattle ; cheerful dinner or tea waiting for me always, on my return from solitary rambles. Everything right and good for me, except only that they never put me through any trials to harden me, or give me decision of character, or make me feel how much they did for me.

But that error was a fearful one, and cost them and me, Heaven only knows how much. And now, I walk to Strid, and Abbey, and

everywhere, with the ghosts of the past days haunting me, and other darker spirits of sorrow and remorse and wonder. Black spirits among the grey, all like a mist between me and the green woods. And I feel like a caterpillar,—stung *just enough*. Foul weather and mist enough, of quite a real kind besides. An hour's sunshine to-day, broken up speedily, and now veiled utterly.

HERNE HILL, LONDON,

11th February, 1875.

I have your sweet letter with news of Dr. John and his brother. I have been working on the book to-day very hard, after much interruption; it is two-thirds done now. So glad people are on tiptoe.

Paddocks are frogs, not toads in that grace.* And why should not people smile? Do you think that God does not like smiling graces? He only dislikes frowns. But you know when once habitual, the child would be told on a cold day to say "Cold as paddocks;" and

* Herrick's. See "Fors Clavigera," Letter XLIII.

everybody would know what was coming. Finally the deep under-meaning, that as the cold hand is lifted, so also the cold heart, and yet accepted, makes it one of the prettiest little hymns I know.

I cannot tell you how very apposite to my work these two feathers are. I am just going to dwell on the exquisite result of the division into successive leaves, by which nature obtains the glittering look to set off her colour; and you just send me two feathers which have it more in perfection than any I ever saw, and I think are more vivid in colour.

How those boys must tease you! but you will be rewarded in the world that good Susies go to.

You must show me the drawing of the grebe. The moss is getting on.

VENICE, 12th September, 1876.

I must just say how thankful it makes me to hear of this true gentleness of English gentlewomen in the midst of the vice and cruelty in which I am forced to live here, where oppres-

sion on one side and license on the other rage as two war-wolves in continual havoc.

It is very characteristic of fallen Venice, as of modern Europe, that here in the principal rooms of one of the chief palaces in the very headmost sweep of the Grand Canal there is not a room for a servant fit to keep a cat or a dog in (as Susie would keep cat or dog, at least).

VENICE, 18th September.

I never knew such a fight as the good and wicked fairies are having over my poor body and spirit just now. The good fairies have got down the St. Ursula for me and given her to me all to myself, and sent me fine weather and nice gondoliers, and a good cook, and a pleasant waiter; and the bad fairies keep putting everything upside down, and putting black in my box when I want white, and making me forget all I want, and find all I don't, and making the hinges come off my boards, and the leaves out of my books, and driving me as wild as wild can be; but I'm getting something done in spite of them, only I never *can* get my letters written.

VENICE, *September 29th.*

I have woful letters telling me you also were woful in saying good-bye. My darling Susie, what *is* the use of your being so good and dear if you can't enjoy thinking of heaven, and what fine goings on we shall all have there?

All the same, even when I'm at my very pioussest, it puts me out if my drawings go wrong. I'm going to draw St. Ursula's blue slippers to-day, and if I can't do them nicely shall be in great despair. I've just found a little cunning inscription on her bedpost, 'IN FANNTIA.' The double N puzzled me at first, but Carpaccio spells anyhow. My head is not good enough for a bedpost. . . . Oh me, the sweet Grange!—Thwaite, I mean (bedpost again); to think of it in this mass of weeds and ruin!

ST. URSULA.

VENICE, *13th November.*

I have to-day your dear little note, and have desired Joan to send you one just written to

her, in which I have given some account of myself, that may partly interest, partly win your pardon for apparent neglect. Coming here, after practically an interval of twenty-four years,—for I have not seriously looked at anything during the two hurried visits with Joan,—my old unfinished work, and the possibilities of its better completion, rise grievously and beguilingly before me, and I have been stretching my hands to the shadow of old designs and striving to fulfil shortcomings, always painful to me, but now, for the moment, intolerable.

I am also approaching the close of the sixth year of Fors, and have plans for the Sabbatical year of it, which make my thoughts active and troubled. I am drawing much, and have got a study of St. Ursula which will give you pleasure; but the pain of being separate from my friends and of knowing they miss me! I wonder if you will think you are making me too vain, Susie. Such vanity is a very painful one, for I know that you look out of the window on Sundays now, wistfully, for Joan's handkerchief. This pain seems always at my heart, with the other which is its own.

I am thankful, always, you like St. Ursula.

One quite fixed plan for the last year of Fors, is that there shall be absolutely no abuse or controversy in it, but things which will either give pleasure or help ; and some clear statements of principle, in language as temperate as hitherto violent ; to show, for one thing, that the violence was not for want of self-command.

I'm going to have a good fling at the Bishops in next Fors to finish with, and then for January !—only I mustn't be too good, Susie, or something would happen to me. So I shall say naughty things still, but in the mildest way.

I am very grateful to you for that comparison about my mind being as crisp as a lettuce. I am *so* thankful you can feel that still. I was beginning to doubt, myself.

ST. MARK'S DOVES.

VENICE, *2nd December.*

I have been very dismal lately. I hope the next captain of St. George's Company will be a merrier one and happier, in being of use. I am inherently selfish, and don't enjoy being of use.

I enjoy painting and picking up stones and flirting with Susies and Kathleens ; it's very odd that I never much care to flirt with any but little girls ! And here I've no Susies nor Kathleens nor Diddies, and I'm only doing lots of good, and I'm very miserable. I've been going late to bed too. I picked myself up last night and went to bed at nine, and feel cheerful enough to ask Susie how she does, and send her love from St. Mark's doves. They're really tiresome now, among one's feet in St. Mark's Place, and I don't know what it will come to. In old times, when there were not so many idlers about, the doves were used to brisk walkers, and moved away a foot or two in front of one ; but now everybody lounges, or stands talking about the Government, and the doves won't stir till one just touches them ; and I who walk fast* am always expecting to tread on them, and it's a nuisance.

If I only had time I would fain make friends with the seagulls, who would be quite like angels if they would only stop on one's balcony. If there were the least bit of truth in Darwinism, Venice would have had

* See "Fors Clavigera," Letter LXXXII., p. 331.

her own born seagulls by this time building their nests at her thresholds.

Now I must get to work. Love to Mary and Miss Rigbye. Now mind you give my message carefully, Susie : because you're a careless little thing.

VENICE, 11th December.

My mouth's watering so for that Thwaite currant jelly, you can't think. I haven't had the least taste of anything of the sort this three months. These wretches of Venetians live on cigars and garlic, and have no taste in their mouths for anything that God makes nice.

The little drawing (returned) is nice in colour and feeling, but, which surprises me, not at all intelligent in line. It is not weakness of hand but fault of perspective instinct, which spoils so many otherwise good botanical drawings.

Bright morning. Sickly moon just hiding in a red cloud, and the morning stars just vanished in light. But we've had nearly three weeks of dark weather, so we mustn't think it poor Coniston's fault—though Conis-

ton *has* faults. Poor little Susie, it shan't have any more nasty messages to carry.

ST. MARK'S REST.

23rd January, 1877.

I've caught cold and can think of nothing to do me good but making you miserable by telling you so.

It's not a very bad one. And it's a wonder I've got so far through the winter without any.

Things have gone very well for me, hitherto, but I have been depressed by hearing of my poor Kate's* illness; and can't think of Brantwood with any comfort, so I come across the lake to the Thwaite.

A great many lovely things happened to me this Christmas, but if I were to tell Susie of them I am sure she would be frightened out of her bright little wits, and think I was going to be a Roman Catholic. I'm writing *such* a Catholic history of Venice, and chiselling all the Protestantism off the old "Stones" as they do here the grass off steps.

All the pigeons of St. Mark's Place send you

* Then, my head servant; now Kate Raven, of Coniston.

their love. St. Ursula adds hers to the eleven thousand birds' love. And the darlingest old Pope who went a pilgrimage with her, hopes you won't be too much shocked if he sends *his* too! (If you're not shocked, *I* am!)

My new Catholic history of Venice is to be called "St. Mark's Rest."

27th January.

Joanie tells me you are writing her such sad little letters. How *can* it be that anyone so good and true as my Susie should be sad? I am sad, bitterly enough and often, but only with sense of fault and folly and lost opportunity such as you have never fallen into or lost. It is very cruel of Fate, I think, to make us sad, who would fain see everybody cheerful, and (cruel of Fate too) to make so many cheerful who make others wretched. The little history of Venice is well on, and will be clear and interesting, I think,—more than most histories of anything. And the stories of saints and nice people will be plenty. Oh me, I wonder, Susie dear, whether you and I are saints, or what we are. You know

you're really a little wicked sometimes as well as me, aren't you ?

Such moonlight as there is to-night, but nothing to what it is at Coniston ! It makes the lagoon water look brown instead of green, which I never noticed before.

SAINTS AND FLOWERS.

VENICE, 17th February.

It is very grievous to me to hear of your being in that woful weather while I have two days' sunshine out of three, and starlight or moonlight always ; to-day the whole chain of the Alps from Vicenza to Trieste shining cloudless all day long, and the seagulls floating high in the blue, like little dazzling boys' kites.

Yes, St. Francis would have been greatly pleased with you watching pussy drink your milk ; so would St. Theodore, as you will see by next Fors, which I have ordered to be sent you in first proof, for I am eager that you should have it. What wonderful flowers these pinks of St. Ursula's are, for life ! They seem to bloom like everlastings.

I get my first rosebud and violets of this

year from St. Helena's Island to-day. How I begin to pity people who have no saints to be good to them! Who is yours at Coniston? There must have been some in the country once upon a time.

With their help I am really getting well on with my history and drawing, and hope for a sweet time at home in the heathery days, and many a nice afternoon tea at the Thwaite.

VENICE, 8th March.

That is entirely new and wonderful to me about the singing mouse.* Douglas (was it the Douglas?) saying "he had rather hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak" needs revision. It is a marvellous fact in natural history.

The wind is singing a wild tune to-night—cannot be colder on our own heaths—and the waves dash like our Waterhead. Oh me, when I'm walking round it again how like a sad dream all this Venice will be!

* A pleasant story that a friend sent me from France. The mouse often came into their sitting-room and actually sang to them, the notes being a little like a canary's.—S. B.

OXFORD,

2nd December.

I write first to you this morning to tell you that I gave yesterday the twelfth and last of my course of lectures this term, to a room crowded by six hundred people, two-thirds members of the University, and with its door wedged open by those who could not get in ; this interest of theirs being granted to me, I doubt not, because for the first time in Oxford, I have been able to speak to them boldly of immortal life. I intended when I began the course only to have read "Modern Painters" to them ; but when I began, some of your favourite bits interested the men so much, and brought so much larger a proportion of undergraduates than usual, that I took pains to re-inforce and press them home ; and people say I have never given so useful a course yet. But it has taken all my time and strength, and I have not been able even to tell Susie a word about it until now. In one of my lectures I made my text your pretty peacock and the design* of him. But did not venture to say, what really must be

* Decorative art of his plumage.

true, that his voice is an example of "the Devil sowed tares," and of the angels letting both grow together. Joanie was "wae" to leave Brantwood and you (and between you and me her letters have been so dull ever since, that I think she has left her wits as well as her heart with you). I am going to see her on Monday week, the 10th, and shall start from home *about* the 20th, undertaking (D.V.), at all events, to come on Christmas morning to your ever kindly opening door.

Love to Mary, and cousin Mary ; how happy it is for me you are all so nice !

My grateful compliments to the peacock. And little (but warm) loves to all your little birds. And best of little loves to the squirrels, only you must send *them* in dream-words, I suppose, up to their nests.

HERNE HILL,

Sunday, 16th December.

It is a long while since I've felt so good for nothing as I do this morning. My very

wristbands curl up in a dog's-eared and disconsolate manner; my little room is all a heap of disorder. I've got a hoarseness and wheezing and sneezing and coughing and choking. I can't speak and I can't think, I'm miserable in bed and useless out of it; and it seems to me as if I could never venture to open a window or go out of a door any more. I have the dimmest sort of diabolical pleasure in thinking how miserable I shall make Susie by telling her all this; but in other respects I seem entirely devoid of all moral sentiments. I have arrived at this state of things, first by catching cold, and since by trying to "amuse myself" for three days. I tried to read "Pickwick," but found that vulgar, and, besides, I know it all by heart. I sent from town for some chivalric romances, but found them immeasurably stupid. I made Baxter read me the *Daily Telegraph*, and found that the Home Secretary had been making an absurd speech about art, without any consciousness that such a person as I had ever existed. I read a lot of games of chess out of Mr. Staunton's handbook, and couldn't understand any of them. I analysed the Dock Company's bill of charges

on a box from Venice, and sent them an examination paper on it. I think *that* did amuse me a little, but the account doesn't. £1 8s. 6d. for bringing a box two feet square from the Tower Wharf to here ! But the worst of all is, that the doctor keeps me shut up here, and I can't get my business done ; and now there isn't the least chance of my getting down to Brantwood for Christmas, nor, as far as I can see, for a fortnight after it. There's perhaps a little of the diabolical enjoyment again in that estimate ; but really the days *do* go, more like dew shaken off branches than real sunrisings and settings. But I'll send you word every day now for a little while how things are going on.

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD.

26th December.

I don't know really whether I *ought* to be at Brantwood or here on Christmas. Yesterday I had two lovely services in my own cathedral. You know the *cathedral* of Oxford is the chapel of Christ Church College, and I have my own high seat in the chancel, as an

honorary student, besides being bred there, and so one is ever so proud and ever so pious all at once, which is ever so nice, you know ; and my own dean, that's the Dean of Christ's Church, who is as big as any bishop, read the services, and the psalms and anthems were lovely ; and then I dined with Henry Acland and his family, where I am an adopted son,—all the more wanted yesterday because the favourite son Herbert died this year in Ceylon,—the first death out of seven sons. So they were glad to have me. Then I've all my Turners here, and shall really enjoy myself a little to-day, I think ; but I do wish I could be at Brantwood too.

Oh dear, I've scribbled this dreadfully. Can you really read my scribble, Susie ? Love, you may always read, however scribbled.

OXFORD, 27th December.

Yes, I really think that must be the way of it. I *am* wholly cattish in that love of teasing. How delighted I used to be if Rosie would ever condescend to be the least bit jealous !

By the way, what a shame it is that we keep that word in the second commandment, as if it meant that God was jealous of images. It means burning, zealous or full of life, visiting, etc., *i.e.*, necessarily when leaving the father leaving the child ; necessarily, when giving the father life, giving life to the child, and to thousands of the race of them that love me.

It is very comic the way people have of being so particular about the second and fourth commandments, and breaking all the rest with the greatest comfort. For me, I try to keep all the rest rather carefully, and let the second and fourth take care of themselves.

Cold quite gone ; now it's your turn, Susie. I've got a love letter in Chinese, and can't read it !

WINDSOR CASTLE,

2nd January, 1878.

I'm horribly sulky this morning, for I expected to have a room with a view, if the room was ever so little, and I've got a great big one looking into the Castle yard, and I feel

exactly as if I was in a big modern county gaol with beautiful turrets of modern Gothic.

I came to see Prince Leopold, who has been a prisoner to his sofa lately, but I trust he is better; he is very bright and gentle, under severe and almost continual pain. My dear little Susie, about that rheumatism of yours? If it wasn't for that, how happy we both ought to be, living in Thwaites and woods, instead of nasty castles! Well, about that Shakespeare guide? I cannot, cannot, at all fancy what it is. In and out among the stars; it sounds like a plan for stringing the stars. I am so very glad you told me of it.

"Unwritten books in my brain?" Yes, but also in how many other brains of quiet people, books unthought of, "In the Book and Volume" which will be read some day in Heaven, aloud, "When saw we thee?" Yes, and "When *read* we ourselves?"

My dear Susie, if I were to think really *lost*, what you for instance have new found in your own powers of receiving and giving pleasure, the beautiful faculties you have, scarcely venturing even to show the consciousness of them, when it awakes in you, what a woful con-

ception I should have of God's not caring for us. He will gather all the wheat into His garner.

INGLETON,

17th January.

It's a charming post here, and brings me my letters the first thing in the morning; and I took care to tell nobody where I was going, except people I wanted to hear from. What a little busy bee of a Susie you've been to get all those extracts ready by this time. I've got nothing done all the while I've been away, but a few mathematical figures, and the less I do the less I find I can do it; and yesterday, for the first time these twenty years at least, I hadn't so much as a "plan" in my head all day. But I had a lot to look at in the moorland flowers and quiet little ancient Yorkshire farmhouses, not to speak of Ingleborough, who was, I think, a little depressed because he knew you were only going to send your remembrances and not your love to him. The clouds gathered on his brow occasionally in

a fretful manner, but towards evening he resumed his peace of mind and sends you his "remembrances" and his "blessing." I believe he saves both you and me from a great deal of east wind.

Well, I've got a plan in my head *this* morning for the new extracts. Shall we call them "Lapides (or "Marmora") Portici"; and put a little preface to them about the pavement of St. Mark's porch and its symbolism of what the education of a good man's early days must be to him? I think I can write something a little true and trustworthy about it. Love to Mary and singing little Joan. You are very right about it's not being good for me to be alone, but I had some nice little times in London with Mary Gladstone, or I shouldn't have known what to do. And now I'm coming home as fast as I can.

26th November.

I have entirely resigned all hope of ever thanking you rightly for bread, sweet odours, roses and pearls, and must just allow myself to be fed, scented, rose-garlanded and be-

pearled as if I were a poor little pet dog or pet pig. But my cold is better, and I *am* getting on with this botany; but it is really too important a work to be pushed for a week or a fortnight. And Mary and you will be pleased at last, I am sure.

I have only to-day got my four families, Clarissa, Lychnis, Scintilla, and Mica, perfectly and simply defined. See how nicely they come.

- A. Clarissa changed from Dianthus, which is bad Greek (and all my pretty flowers have names of girls). Petal *jagged* at the outside.
- B. Lychnis. Petal *divided in two* at the outside, and the fringe retired to the top of the limb.
- C. Scintilla. (Changed from Stellaria, because I want Stella for the house leeks.) Petal formed by the *two* lobes of Lychnis without the retired fringe.
- D. Mica. *Single* lobed petal.

When once these four families are well understood in typical examples, how easy it will be to attach either subordinate groups or specialities of habitat, as in America, to some kinds of them! The entire order, for their purity and wildness, are to be named, from Artemis, "Artemides," instead of Caryophyllaceæ; and next them come the Vestals (mints,

lavenders, etc.); and then the Cytheride Viola, Veronica, Giulietta, the last changed from Polygala.

That third herb Robert one is just the drawing that nobody but me (never mind grammar) could have made. Nobody! because it means ever so much careful watching of the ways of the leaf, and a lot of work in cramp perspective besides. It is not quite right yet, but it *is* nice.

It is so nice to be able to find anything that is in the least new to *you*, and interesting; my rocks are quite proud of rooting that little saxifrage.

I'm scarcely able to look at one flower because of the two on each side, in my garden just now. I want to have bees' eyes, there are so many lovely things.

I must tell you, interrupting my botanical work this morning, something that has just chanced to me.

I am arranging the caryophylls which I mass broadly into "Clarissa," the true jagged-leaved and clove-scented ones; "Lychnis," those

whose leaves are essentially in two lobes ;
"Arenaria," which I leave untouched ; and
"Mica," a new name of my own for the pearl-
worts of which the French name is to be Miette,
and the representative type (now *Sagina pro-*
cumbent) is to be in—

Latin—Mica amica.

French—Miette l'amie.

English—Pet pearlwort.

Then the next to this is to be—

Latin—Mica millegrana.

French—Miette aux mille perles.

English—Thousand pearls.

Now this on the whole I consider the prettiest of the group, and so look for a plate of it which I can copy. Hunting all through my botanical books, I find the best of all is Baxter's Oxford one, and determine at once to engrave that. When turning the page of his text I find : "The specimen of this curious and interesting little plant from which the accompanying drawing was made was communicated to me by Miss Susan Beever. To the kindness of this young lady, and that of her sister, Miss Mary Beever, I am indebted for the four plants figured in this number."

I have copied lest you should have trouble in looking for the book, but now, you darling Susie, please tell me whether I may not separate these lovely pearlworts wholly from the spergulas,—by the pearlworts having only two leaves like real pinks at the joints, and the spergulas, a *cluster*; and tell me how the spergulas scatter their seeds, I can't find any account of it.

I would fain have come to see that St. Bruno lily; but if I don't come to see Susie and you, be sure I am able to come to see nothing. At present I am very deeply involved in the classification of the minerals in the Sheffield Museum, important as the first practical arrangement ever yet attempted for popular teaching, and this with my other work makes me fit for nothing in the afternoon but wood chopping. But I will call to-day on Dr. Brown's friends.

I hope you will not be too much shocked with the audacities of the new number of "Proserpina," or with its ignorances. I am going during my wood chopping really to ascer-

tain in my own way what simple persons ought to know about tree growth, and give it clearly in the next number. I meant to do the whole book very differently, but can only now give the fragmentary pieces as they chance to come, or it would never be done at all.

You must know before anybody else how the exogens are to be completely divided. I keep the four great useful groups, mallow, geranium, mint, and wallflower, under the head of domestic orders, that their sweet service and companionship with us may be understood; then the water-lily and the heath, both four foils, are to be studied in their solitudes (I shall throw all that are not four foils out of the Ericaceæ); then finally there are to be seven orders of the dark proserpine, headed by the draconids (snapdragons), and including the anemones, hellebores, ivies, and forget-me-nots.

What plants I cannot get ranged under these $12 + 4 + 2 + 7 = 25$ in all, orders, I shall give broken notices of, as I have time, leaving my pupils to arrange them as they like. I can't do it all.

The whole household was out after breakfast to-day to the top of the moor to plant

cranberries ; and we squeezed and splashed and spluttered in the boggiest places the lovely sunshine had left, till we found places squashy and squeezezy enough to please the most particular and coolest of cranberry minds ; and then each of us choosing a little special bed of bog, the tufts were deeply put in with every manner of tacit benediction, such as might befit a bog and a berry, and many an expressed thanksgiving to Susie and to the kind sender of the luxuriant plants. I have never had gift from you, dear Susie, more truly interesting and gladdening to me, and many a day I shall climb the moor to see the fate of the plants and look across to the Thwaite. I've been out most of the forenoon and am too sleepy to shape letters, but will try and get a word of thanks to the far finder of the dainty things to-morrow.

What loveliness everywhere in a duckling sort of state just now.

27th November.

We've all been counting and considering how old you can possibly be to-day, and have made up our minds that you are really thirteen, and must begin to be serious. There have been some hints about the necessity of sending you to school, which I have taken no notice of, hoping that you will really at last make up your mind to do your lessons at home like a dear good little girl as you are. And because to-day you enter into your "teens" I have sent you a crystal, and a little bit of native gold, and a little bit of native silver, for symbols of this lovely "nativity" of previous years ; and I do wish you all love and joy and peace in them.

TO MISS BEEVER.

20th January, 1879.

You will not doubt the extreme sorrow with which I have heard of all that was ordered to be, of terrible, in your peaceful and happy household. Without for an instant supposing, but, on the contrary, utterly refusing to admit,

that such calamities* may be used to point a moral (all useful morality having every point that God meant it to have, perfectly sharp and bright without any burnishing of *ours*), still less to adorn a tale (the tales of modern days depending far too much upon Scythian decoration with Death's heads), I, yet, if I had been Mr. Chapman, would have pointed out that all concealments, even of trivial matters, on the part of young servants from kind mistresses, are dangerous no less than unkind and ungenerous, and that a great deal of preaching respecting the evil nature of man and the anger of God might be spared, if children and servants were only taught, as a religious principle, to tell their mothers and mistresses, when they go out, exactly where they are going and what they are going to do. I think both you and Miss Susan ought to use every possible means of changing, or at least checking, the current of such thoughts in your minds; and I am in hopes that you may have a little pleasure in examining the plates in the volume of Sibthorpe's "*F. Græca*" which I

* One of our younger servants had gone on to the frozen lake; the ice gave way, and she was drowned.—S. B.

send to-day, in comparison with those of "F. Danica." The vulgarity and lifelessness of Sibthorpe's plates are the more striking because in mere execution they are the more elaborate of the two; the chief point in the "F. Danica" being the lovely artistic skill. The drawings for Sibthorpe, by a young German, were as exquisite as the Danes, but the English engraver and colourist spoiled all.

I will send you, if you like them, the other volumes in succession. I find immense interest in comparing the Greek and Danish forms or conditions of the same English flower.

I send the second volume, in which the Rufias are lovely, and scarcely come under my above condemnation. The *first* is nearly all of grass.

4th February.

You know I'm getting my Oxford minerals gradually to Brantwood, and whenever a box comes, I think whether there are any that I don't want myself, which might yet have leave to live on Susie's table. And to-day I've found a very soft purple agate, that looks as

if it were nearly melted away with pity for birds and flies, which is like Susie ; and another piece of hard wooden agate with only a little ragged sky of blue here and there, which is like me ; and a group of crystals with grass of Epidote inside, which is like what my own little cascade has been all the winter by the garden side ; and so I've had them all packed up, and I hope you will let them live at the Thwaite.

Then here are some more bits, if you will be a child. Here's a green piece, long, of the stone they cut those green weedy brooches out of, and a nice mouse-coloured natural agate, and a great black and white one, stained with sulphuric acid, black, but very fine always, and interesting in its lines.

Oh dear, the cold ; but it's worth *any* cold to have that delicious Robin dialogue. Please write some more of it ; you hear all they say, I'm sure.

I cannot tell you how delighted I am with your lovely gift to Joanie. The perfection of the stone, its exquisite colour, and superb weight, and flawless clearness, and the delicate cutting, which makes the light flash from

it like a wave of the Lake, make it altogether the most perfect mineralogical and heraldic jewel that Joanie could be bedecked with, and it is as if Susie had given her a piece of Coniston Water itself.

And the setting is delicious, and positively must not be altered. I shall come on Sunday to thank you myself for it. Meantime I'm working hard at the Psalter, which I am almost sure Susie will like.

25th May.

This is a most wonderful stone that Dr. Kendall has found—at least to *me*. I have never seen anything quite like it, the arborescent forms of the central thread of iron being hardly ever assumed by an ore of so much metallic lustre. I think it would be very desirable to cut it, so as to get a perfectly smooth surface to show the arborescent forms; if Dr. Kendall would like to have it done, I can easily send it up to London with my own next parcel.

I want very much to know exactly where it was found; might I come and ask about it

on Dr. Kendall's next visit to you? I could be there waiting for him any day.

I am thinking greatly of our George Herbert, but me's so wicked I don't know where to begin.

But I never have had nicer letters "since first I saw your face" and tried to honour and reverence you.

Violet's better, and I'm pretty well, but have a little too much thinking of old days.

Have you any word of the Collies lately? I keep sending stones and books; they answer not. It is delightful of you to be interested in that stone book. I send you one of my pictures of stones. They're not very like, but they're pretty. I wish they did such pictures now.

What lovely pies (pictures?) you would have made in the old butterfly times, of opal and felspar! What lost creatures we all are, we nice ones! The Alps and clouds that *I* could have done, if I had been shown how.

27th June.

Everybody's gone! and I have all the new potatoes, and all the asparagus, and all the

oranges and everything, and my Susie too, all to myself.

I wrote in my diary this morning that really on the whole I never felt better in my life. Mouth, eyes, head, feet, and fingers all fairly in trim ; older than they were, yes, but if the head and heart grow wiser, they won't want feet or fingers some day.

Indeed that is too sad about Florence. I've written a line to her by this post, and will do all the little I can to cheer her.

And I'll come to be cheered and scolded myself the moment I've got things a little to rights here. I think imps get into the shelves and drawers, if they're kept long locked, and must be caught like mice. The boys have been very good, and left everything untouched but the imps ; and to hear people say there aren't any ! How happy you and I should always be if it weren't for them ! But we're both so naughty we can't expect them to let us alone. Can we ?

How gay you were and how you cheered me up after the dark lake.

Please say " John Inglesant " is harder than real history and of no mortal use. I couldn't read four pages of it. Clever, of course.

HERNE HILL, 14th August, 1880.

I've *just* finished my Scott paper : but it has retouchings and notings yet to do. I couldn't write a word before ; haven't so much as a syllable to Diddie, and only a move at chess to Macdonald, for you know to keep a chess player waiting for a move is like keeping St. Lawrence unturned.

21st August, 1880.

I'm leaving to-day for Dover, and a line from you to-morrow or Monday would find me certainly at Poste Restante, Abbeville, and please, please tell me the funny thing Miss —— said.

I have not been working at all, but enjoying myself (only that takes up time all the same) at Crystal Palace concerts, and jugglings, and at Zoological Gardens, where I had a snake seven feet long to play with, only I hadn't much time to make friends, and it rather wanted to get away all the time. And I gave the hippopotamus *whole* buns, and he was delighted, and saw the cormorant catch fish thrown to him six yards off ; never missed

one; you would have thought the fish ran along a wire up to him and down his throat. And I saw the penguin swim under water, and the sea lions sit up, four of them on four wooden chairs, and catch fish also; but they missed sometimes and had to flop off their chairs into the water and then flop out again and flop up again.

And I lunched with Cardinal Manning, and he gave me *such* a plum pie. I never tasted a Protestant pie to touch it.

Now you're just wrong about my darling Cardinal. See what it is to be jealous! He gave me lovely soup, roast beef, hare and currant jelly, puff pastry like Papal pretensions—you had but to breathe on it and it was nowhere—raisins and almonds, and those lovely preserved cherries like kisses kept in amber. And told me delicious stories all through lunch. *There!*

And we really do see the sun here! And last night the sky was all a spangle and delicate glitter of stars, the glare of them and spikiness softened off by a young darling of a moon.

And I'm having rather a time of it in boudoirs, turned into smiling instead of pouting service. But I'm not going to stay over my three weeks. How nice that you *can* and will walk round the dining-room for exercise!

CALAIS, 24th August.

I'm not very far away yet, you see. I stayed here for auld lang syne, but with endless sorrow, of which I need not give you any part of the burden.

The sea has been beautiful, and I am better for the great rest and change.

AMIENS, 29th August.

You have been made happy doubtless with us by the news from Herne Hill. I've only a telegram yet though, but write at once to congratulate you on your little goddaughter.

Also to say that I am very well, and sadly longing for Brantwood; but that I am glad to see some vestige of beloved things here, once more.

We have glorious weather, and I am getting perfect rest most of the day—mere saunter in

the sunny air, taking all the good I can of it. To-morrow we get (D.V.) to Beauvais, where perhaps I may find a letter from Susie ; in any case you may write to Hotel Meurice, Paris.

The oleanders are coming out and geraniums in all cottage windows, and golden corn like Etruscan jewellery over all the fields.

BEAUVAIS, 3rd September.

We are having the most perfect weather I ever saw in France, much less anywhere else, and I'm taking a thorough rest, writing scarcely anything and sauntering about old town streets all day.

I made a little sketch of the lake from above the Waterhead which goes everywhere with me, and it is so curious when the wind blows the leaf open when I am sketching here at Beauvais, where all is so differently delightful, as if we were on the other side of the world.

I think I shall be able to write some passages about architecture yet, which Susie will like. I hear of countless qualities being discovered in the new little Susie ! And all things will be happy for me if you send me a line to Hotel Meurice saying *you* are happy too.

PARIS, 4th September.

I have all your letters, and rejoice in them ; though it is a little sadder for you looking at empty Brantwood, than for me to fancy the bright full Thwaite, and then it's a great shame that I've everything to amuse me, and lovely Louvres and shops and cathedrals and coquettes and pictures and plays and prettinesses of every colour and quality, and you've only your old, old hills and quiet lake. Very thankful I shall be to get back to them, though.

We have finished our Paris this afternoon, and hope to leave for Chartres on Monday.

HOTEL DE MEURICE, PARIS, 4th September.

Is it such pain to you when people say what they ought not to say about *me* ? But when do they say what they ought to say about anything ? Nearly everything I have ever done or said is as much above the present level of public understanding as the Old Man is above the Waterhead.

We have had the most marvellous weather thus far, and have seen Paris better than ever

I've seen it yet,—and to-day at the Louvre we saw the Casette of St. Louis, the Coffre of Anne of Austria, the porphyry vase, made into an eagle, of an old Abbé Segur, or some such name. All these you can see also, you know, in those lovely photographs of Miss Rigbye's, if you can only make out in this vile writing of mine what I mean.

But it is so hot. I can scarcely sit up or hold the pen, but tumble back into the chair every half minute and unbutton another button of waistcoat, and gasp a little, and nod a little, and wink a little, and sprinkle some eau de Cologne a little, and try a little to write a little, and forget what I had to say, and where I was, and whether it's Susie or Joan I'm writing to; and then I see some letters I've never opened that came by this morning's post, and think I'd better open them perhaps; and here I find in one of them a delightful account of the quarrel that goes on in this weather between the nicest elephant in the Zoo' and his keeper, because he won't come out of his bath. I saw them at it myself, when I was in London, and saw the elephant take up a stone and throw it hard against a door which the

keeper was behind,—but my friend writes, “I *must* believe from what I saw that the elephant knew he would injure the man with the stones, for he threw them hard to the *side* of him, and then stood his ground ; when, however, he threw water and wetted the man, he plunged into the bath to avoid the whip ; not fearing punishment when he merely showed what he could do and did not.”

The throwing the stone hard at the door when the keeper was on the other side of it, must have been great fun for him !

I am so sorry to have crushed this enclosed scrawl. It has been carried about in my pocket to be finished, and I see there's no room for the least bit of love at the bottom. So here's a leaf full from the Bois de Boulogne, which is very lovely ; and we drive about by night or day, as if all the sky were only the roof of a sapphire palace set with warm stars.

CHARTRES, 8th September.

(*Hotel du Grand Monarque.*)

I suppose *I'm* the grand Monarque ! I don't know of any other going just now, but I don't feel quite the right thing without a wig. Any

how, I'm having everything my own way just now,—weather, dinner, news from Joanie and news from Susie, only I don't like her to be so very, very sad, though it *is* nice to be missed so tenderly. But I do hope you will like to think of my getting some joy in old ways again, and once more exploring old streets and finding forgotten churches.

The sunshine is life and health to me, and I am gaining knowledge faster than ever I could when I was young.

This is just to say where I am, and that you might know where to write.

The cathedral here is the grandest in France, and I stay a week at least.

CHARTRES, *13th September.*

I must be back in England by the 1st October, and by the 10th shall be myself ready to start for Brantwood, but may perhaps stay, if Joanie is not ready, till she can come too. Anyway, I trust very earnestly to be safe in the shelter of my own woodside by the end of October. I wonder what you will say of my account of the Five Lovers of Nature *

* Rousseau, Shelley, Byron, Turner, and John Ruskin.

and seclusion in the last *Nineteenth Century*?

I am a little ashamed to find that in spite of my sublimely savage temperament, I take a good deal more pleasure in Paris than of old, and am even going back there on Friday for three more days.

We find the people here very amiable, and the French old character unchanged. The perfect cleanliness and unruffledness of white cap, is always a marvel, and the market groups exquisite, but our enjoyment of the fair is subdued by pity for a dutiful dog, who turns a large wheel (by walking up it inside) the whole afternoon, producing awful sounds out of a huge grinding organ, of which his wheel and he are the unfortunate instruments. Him we love, his wheel we hate! and in general all French musical instruments. I have become quite sure of one thing on this journey, that the French of to-day have no sense of harmony, but only of more or less lively tune, and even, for a time, will be content with any kind of clash or din produced in time.

The Cathedral service is, however, still impressive.

16th February, 1881.

I've much to tell you "to-day" * of answer to those prayers you prayed for me. But you must be told it by our good angels, for your eyes must not be worn. God willing, you shall see men as trees walking in the garden of God, on this pretty Coniston earth of ours. Don't be afraid, and please be happy, for I can't be, if you are not. Love to Mary, to Miss Rigbye, and my own St. Ursula,† and mind you give the messages *to all three, heartily.*

22nd April.

I'm not able to scratch or fight to-day, or I wouldn't let you cover me up with this heap of gold; but I've got a rheumatic creak in my neck, which makes me physically stiff and morally supple and unprincipled, so I've put two pounds sixteen in my own "till," where it just fills up some lowering of the tide lately by German bands and the like, and I've put ten pounds aside for Sheffield Museum, now

* The motto on Mr. Ruskin's seal. See "Præterita," Vol. II., p. 286.

† Photograph of Carpaccio's.

in instant mendicity, and I've put ten pounds aside till you and I can have a talk and you be made reasonable, after being scolded and scratched, after which, on your promise to keep to our old bargain and enjoy spending your little "Frondes" income, I'll be your lovingest again. And for the two pounds ten, and the ten, I am really most heartily grateful, meaning as they do so much that is delightful for both of us in the good done by this work of yours.

I send you Spenser ; perhaps you had better begin with the Hymn to Beauty, page 39, and then go on to the Tears ; but you'll see how you like it. It's better than Longfellow ; see line 52—

"The house of blessed gods which men call skye."

Now I'm going to look out Dr. Kendall's crystal. It *must* be crystal,* for having brought back the light to your eyes.

12th July.

How delightful that you have that nice Mrs. Howard to hear you say "The Ode to Beauty,"

* For a present to Dr. Kendall.

and how nice that you can learn it and enjoy saying it!* I do not know it myself. I only know that it should be known and said and heard and loved.

I *am* often near you in thought, but can't get over the lake somehow. There's always somebody to be looked after here, now. I've to rout the gardeners out of the greenhouse, or I should never have a strawberry or a pink, but only nasty gloxinias and glaring fuchsias, and I've been giving lessons to dozens of people and writing charming sermons in the "Bible of Amiens"; but I get so sleepy in the afternoon, I can't pull myself over it.

I was looking at your notes on birds yesterday. How sweet they are! But I can't forgive that young blackbird for getting wild again.

*Last day of 1881. And the last letter
I write on it, with new pen.*

I've lunched on *your* oysters, and am feasting eyes and mind on *your* birds.

What birds?

* I learnt the whole of it by heart, and could then say it without a break. I have always loved it, and in return it has helped me through many a long and sleepless night.—S.B.

Woodcock? Yes, I suppose, and never before noticed the *sheath* of his bill going over the front of the lower mandible that he may dig comfortably! But the others! the glory of velvet and silk and cloud and light, and black and tan and gold, and golden sand, and dark tresses, and purple shadows and moors and mists and night and starlight, and woods and wilds and dells and deeps, and every mystery of heaven and its finger work, is in those little birds' backs and wings. I am so grateful. All love and joy to you, and wings to fly with and birds' hearts to comfort, and mine, be to you in the coming year.

Easter Day, 1882.

I have had a happy Easter morning, entirely bright in its sun and clear in sky; and with renewed strength enough to begin again the piece of St. Benedict's life where I broke off, to lose these four weeks in London,—weeks not wholly lost neither, for I have learned more and more of what I should have known without lessoning; but I *have* learnt it, from these repeated dreams and fantasies, that we walk in a vain shadow and disquiet ourselves in

vain. So I am for the present, everybody says, quite good, and give as little trouble as possible ; but people *will* take it, you know, sometimes, even when I don't give it, and there's a great fuss about me yet. But *you* must not be anxious any more, Susie, for really there is no more occasion at one time than another. All the doctors say I needn't be ill unless I like, and I don't mean to like any more ; and as far as chances of ordinary danger, I think one runs more risks in a single railway journey, than in the sicknesses of a whole year.

8th June.

You write as well as ever, and the eyes must surely be better, and it was a joyful amazement to me to hear that Mary was able to read and could enjoy my child's botany. You always have things before other people ; will you please send me some rosemary and lavender as soon as any are out ? I am busy on the Labiatae, and a good deal bothered. Also St. Benedict, whom I shall get done with long before I've made out the nettles he rolled in.

I'm sure I ought to roll myself in nettles,

burdocks, and blackthorn, for here in London I can't really think now of anything but flirting, and I'm only much the worse for it afterwards.

And I'm generally wicked and weary, like the people who ought to be put to rest. But you'd miss me, and so would Joanie; so I suppose I shall be let stay a little while longer.

SALLENCHES, SAVOY, 13th September.

I saw Mont Blanc again to-day, unseen since 1877; and was very thankful. It is a sight that always redeems me to what I am capable of at my poor little best, and to what loves and memories are most precious to me. So I write to *you*, one of the few true loves left. The snow has fallen fresh on the hills, and it makes me feel that I must soon be seeking shelter at Brantwood and the Thwaite.

GENOA, Sunday, 24th September.

I got your delightful note yesterday at Turin, and it made me wish to run back through the tunnel directly instead of coming on here. But I had a wonderful day, the Alps clear all the morning all round Italy—two

hundred miles of them ; and then in the afternoon blue waves of the Gulf of Genoa breaking like blue clouds, thunderclouds, under groves of olive and palm. But I wished they were my sparkling waves of Coniston instead, when I read your letter again.

What a gay Susie, receiving all the world, like a Queen Susan (how odd one has never heard of a Queen Susan!), only you *are* so naughty, and you never do tell me of any of those nice girls when they're *coming*, but only when they're gone, and I never shall get glimpse of them as long as I live.

But you know you really represent the entire Ruskin school of the Lake Country, and I think these *levées* of yours must be very amusing and enchanting ; but it's very dear and good of you to let the people come and enjoy themselves, and how really well and strong you must be to be able for it.

I am very glad to hear of those sweet, shy girls, poor things.* I suppose the sister they are now anxious about is the one that would

* Florence, Alice, and May Bennett. Florence is gone. Alice and May still sometimes at Coniston, D.G. (March 1887).

live by herself on the other side of the Lake, and study Emerson and aspire to Buddhism.

I'm trying to put my own poor little fragmentary *Ism* into a rather more connected form of imagery. I've never quite set myself up enough to impress *some* people; and I've written so much that I can't quite make out what I am myself, nor what it all comes to.

TO MISS BEEVER.

10th January, 1883.

I cannot tell you how grateful and glad I am, to have your lovely note and to know that the Bewick gave you pleasure, and that you are so entirely well now, as to enjoy anything requiring so much energy and attention to this degree. For indeed I can scarcely now take pleasure myself in things that give me the least trouble to look at, but I know that the pretty book and its chosen woodcuts ought to be sent to you, first of all my friends (I have not yet thought of sending it to anyone else), and I am quite put in heart after a very despondent yesterday, past inanely, in thinking of what *I couldn't* do, by feeling what you *can*,

and hoping to share the happy Christmas time with you and Susie in future years. Will you please tell my dear Susie I'm going to bring over a drawing to show! (so thankful that I am still able to draw after these strange and terrible illnesses) this afternoon. I am in hopes it may clear, but dark or bright I'm coming, about half past three, and am ever your and her most affectionate and faithful servant.

24th September, 1884.

I wandered literally "up and down" your mountain garden—(how beautifully the native rocks slope to its paths in the sweet evening light, Susiesque light!)—with great happiness and admiration, as I went home, and I came indeed upon what I conceived to be—discovered in the course of recent excavations—two deeply interesting thrones of the ancient Abbots of Furness, typifying their humility in that the seats thereof were only level with the ground between two clusters of the earth; contemplating cyclamen, and their severity of penance, in the points of stone prepared for the mortification of their backs; but truly, Susie's seat of repose and meditation I was

unable as yet to discern, but propose to myself further investigation of that apple-perfumed paradise, and am ever your devoted and enchanted.

1st December.

I gave my fourteenth, and last for this year, lecture this afternoon with vigour and effect, and am safe and well (D. G.), after such a spell of work as I never did before. I have been thrown a week out in all my plans, by having to write two new Lectures, instead of those the University was frightened at. The scientists slink out of my way now, as if I was a mad dog, for I let them have it hot and heavy whenever I've a chance at them.

But as I said, I'm a week late, and though I start for the North this day week, I can't get home till this day fortnight at soonest, but I hope not later than to-morrow fortnight. Very thankful I shall be to find myself again at the little room door.

Fancy Mary Gladstone forgiving me even that second naughtiness! She's going to let me come to see her this week, and to play to me, which is a great comfort.

ST. SUSIE, *27th November, 1885.*

Behold Athena and Apollo both come to bless you on your birthday, and all the buds of the year to come, rejoice with you, and your poor cat* is able to purr again, and is extremely comfortable and even cheerful "to-day." And we will make more and more of all the days, won't we, and we will burn our candle at both beginnings instead of both ends, every day beginning two worlds—the old one to be lived over again, the new to learn our golden letters in. Not that I mean to write books in that world. I hope to be set to do something, there; and what lovely "receptions" you will have in your little heavenly Thwaite, and celestial teas. And you won't spoil the cream with hot water, will you, any more?

The whole village is enjoying itself, I hear, and the widows and orphans to be much the better for it, and altogether, you and I have a jolly time of it, haven't we?

20th February, 1886.

I haven't had anything nice to send you this ever so long, but here's a little bird's nest of

* J. R.

native silver which you could almost live in as comfortably as a tit. It will stand nicely on your table without upsetting, and is so comfortable to hold, and altogether I'm pleased to have got it for you.

1st March.

Yes, I knew you would like that silver shrine ! and it *is* an extremely rare and perfect specimen. But you need not be afraid in handling it ; if the little bit of spar does come off it, or out of it, no matter.

But of course nobody else should touch it, till you give them leave, and show them how.

I am sorry for poor Miss Brown, and for your not having known the Doctor. He should have come here when I told him. I believe he would have been alive yet, and I never should have been ill.

I believe you know more Latin than I do, and can certainly make more delightful use of it.

Your mornings' ministry to the birds must be remembered for you by the angels who

paint their feathers. They will all, one day, be birds of Paradise, and say, when the adverse angel accuses you of being naughty to *some* people, "But we were hungry and she gave us corn, and took care that nobody else ate it."

I am indeed thankful you are better. But you must please tell me what the thing was I said which gave you so much pain. Do you recollect also what the little bit in "*Proserpina*" was that said so much to you? Were you not thinking of "*Fors*"?

I am very thankful for all your dear letters always—greatly delighted above all with the squirrel one, and Chaucer. Didn't he love squirrels! and don't I wish I was a squirrel in Susie's pear trees, instead of a hobbling disconsolate old man, with no teeth to bite, much less crack, anything, and particularly forbidden to eat nuts!

Your precious letter, showing me you are a little better, came this morning, with the exquisite feathers, one, darker and lovelier than

any I have seen, but please, I still want one not in the least flattened; all these have lost just the least bit of their shell-like bending. You can so easily devise a little padding to keep two strong cards or bits of wood separate for one or two to lie happily in. I don't mind giving you this tease, for the throat will be better the less you remember it. But for all of us, a dark sky is assuredly a poisonous and depressing power, which neither surgery nor medicine can resist. The difference to me between nature as she is now, and as she was ten years ago, is as great as between Lapland and Italy, and the total loss of comfort in morning and evening sky, the most difficult to resist of all spiritual hostility.

1st May, 1886.

What lovely letters you are writing *me* just now, but as for my not having said any pretty things of *you* for a long while, you know perfectly that I am saying them in my heart every day and all day long! I can't find a shell marble, but I send you (to look at, it's too ugly for a present) a shell *agate* made of shells, *in* a shell, as if in a pot!

And I send you for a May-day gift, with all loving May, June, and December, and January wishes, such a pretty green and white stone gone maying, as one doesn't often see with the rest of the Jacks-in-the-green.

And I'm ever (or at least for a while yet) your curled up old cat. I shall come out of curl and get frisky when the hyacinths come out. Telegram just come from Ireland: "Rose queen elected; sweetly pretty, and all most happy."

22nd May, 1886.

Of course the little pyramid in crystal is a present. With that enjoyment of Pinkerton,* you will have quite a new indoors interest, whatever the rain may say.

How very lucky you asked me what basalt was! How much has come out of it (written in falling asleep)? I've been out all the morning and am *so* sleepy.

But I've written a nice little bit of "Præterita" before I went out, trying to describe the Rhone at Geneva. I think Susie will like it, if nobody else.

That "not enjoying the beauty of things"

* Pinkerton on "Petralogy."

goes ever so much deeper than mere blindness. It is a form of antagonism, and is essentially Satanic. A most strange form of demonology in otherwise good people, or shall we say in "good people"? You know *we* are not good at all, are we now?

I don't think you've got any green in your mica. I've sent you a bit enclosed with some jealous spots in.

Last day of May.

I'm bringing to-day with the strawroots, twelve more sketches in folio, and the plan is that out of those, making with the rest twenty-four, you choose twelve to keep next week, with the new folio of twelve to be then brought, and you then put aside twelve to be given back in exchange for it, then next to next week you choose twelve out of that twenty-four, and then next week twelve out of its twenty-four, and then when I can't send any more you choose the one to keep out of the last lot, which you see will then be the creamiest cream, not to say cheesiest cheese of the rest! Now isn't that a nice amusing categorical, cataloquizical, catechismic, catcataceous plan?

7th June.

You have been what Joanie calls a "Doosie Dandy" about those dozens of sketches! You're always to have twenty-four on hand, then those I send to-day are to stay with the twelve you have, till next Monday, and you'll have time then to know which you like best to keep. Next Monday I send *another* twelve and take back the twelve you've done with.

It was very beautiful yesterday looking from here.

I'm pretty well, and writing saucy things to everybody.

I told a Cambridge man yesterday that he had been clever enough to put into a shilling pamphlet all the mistakes of his generation.

26th November.

Do you know how to make sugar candy? In my present abject state the only way of amusing myself I can hit on is setting the girls of the school to garden and cook! By way of beginning in cooking I offered to pay for any quantity of wasted sugar if they could

produce me a crystal or two of sugar candy. (On the way to twelfth cakes, you know, and sugar animals. One of Francesca's friends made her a life-size Easter lamb in sugar.) The first try this morning was brought me in a state of sticky jelly.

And after sending me a recipe for candy, would you please ask Harry to look at the school garden? I'm going to get the *boys* to keep that in order; but if Harry would look at it and order some mine gravel down for the walks, and, with Mr. Brocklebank's authority (to whom I have spoken already), direct any of the boys who are willing to form a corps of little gardeners, and under Harry's orders make the best that can be made of that neglected bit of earth, I think you and I should enjoy hearing of it.

Mr. Kendall is a Delphic oracle. Do you think you could take sherry instead of port? My sherry is,—well I only wish Falstaff were alive to tell you what it is, or Will himself; but shall I send you a bottle? And mind you don't mind the smarting if Dr. K. gives you things to make you cry. And I'll be so good, and not make you cry for a week at least.

27th November, 1886.

For once, I have a birthday stone for you, a little worth your having, and a little glad-some to me in the giving. It is blue like the air that you were born into, and always live in. It is as deep as gentians, and has their gleams of green in it, and it is precious all through within and without, as Susie herself is. Many and many returns of all the birthdays that have gone away, and crowds yet of those that never were here before.

MISCELLANEOUS.

I never heard the like, my writing good ! and just now !! If you only saw the wretched notes on the back of lecture leaves.

But I am so very glad you think it endurable, and it is so nice to be able to give you a moment's pleasure by such a thing. I'm better to-day, but still extremely languid. I believe that there is often something in the spring which weakens one by its very tenderness ; the violets in the wood send one home sorrowful that one isn't worthy to see them, or else, that one isn't one of them.

It is mere Midsummer dream in the wood to-day.

You could not possibly have sent me a more delightful present than this *Lychnis* ; it is the kind of flower that gives me pleasure and health and memory and hope and everything

that Alpine meadows and air can. I'm getting better generally, too. The sun *did* take one by surprise at first.

How blessedly happy Joanie and the children were yesterday at the Thwaite! I'm coming to be happy myself there to-morrow (D.V.).

Here are the two bits of study I did in Malham Cove; the small couples of leaves are different portraits of the first shoots of the two geraniums. I don't find in any botany an account of their little round side leaves, or of the definite central one above the branching of them.

Here's your lovely note just come. I am very thankful that the "Venice" gives you so much pleasure.

I *have*, at least, one certainty, which few authors could hold so surely, that no one was ever harmed by a book of mine; they may have been offended, but have never been discouraged or discomfited, still less corrupted.

There's a saucy speech for Susie's friend. You won't like me any more if I begin to talk like that.

The nice bread is come. May I come to tea again to-morrow?

I never send my love to Miss Beever, but
I do love her for all that.

A sapphire is the same stone as a ruby;
both are the pure earth of clay crystallised.
No one knows why one is red and the other
blue.

A diamond is pure *coal* crystallised.

An opal, pure flint—in a state of fixed *jelly*.

I'll find a Susie-book on them.

I'll send H. Carlyle. I am so very glad you
enjoy it.

I'm in a great passion with the horrid people
who write letters to tease my good little Susie.
I won't have it. She shall have some more
stones to-morrow.

I must have a walk to-day, and can't give
account of them, but I've looked them out.
It's so very nice that you like stones. If my
father, when I was a little boy, would only
have given me stones for bread, how I should
have thanked him, but one doesn't expect such
a taste in little girls.

What infinite power and treasure you have
in being able thus to enjoy the least things,

yet having at the same time all the fastidiousness of taste and imagination which lays hold of what is greatest in the least, and best in all things!

Never hurt your eyes by writing; keep them wholly for admiration and wonder. I hope to write little more myself of books, and to join with you in joy over crystals and flowers in the way we used to do when we were both more children than we are.

I have been rather depressed by that tragic story of the codling. I hope the thief of that apple has suffered more than Eve, and fallen farther than either she or Adam.

Joan had to be out early this morning, and I won't let her write more, for it's getting dark; but she thinks of you and loves you, and so do I, every day more and more.

TO MISS BEEVER.

I am ashamed not to have sent you a word of expression of my real and very deep feelings of regard and respect for you, and of my, not *fervent* (in the usual phrase, which means only

hasty and ebullient), but serenely *warm*, hope that you may keep your present power of benevolent happiness to length of many days to come. But I hope you will sometimes take the simpler view of the little agate box than that of birthday token, and that you will wonder sometimes at its labyrinth of mineral vegetable! I assure you there is nothing in all my collection of agates in its way quite so perfect as the little fiery forests of dotty trees in the corner of the piece which forms the bottom. I ought to have set it in silver, but was always afraid to trust it to a lapidary.

What you say of the Greek want of violets is also very interesting to me, for it is one of my little pet discoveries that Homer means the blue iris by the word translated "violet."

I am utterly sorry not to come to see you and Susie before leaving for town, but can't face this bitter day. I hope and solemnly purpose to be back in a week.

Thursday morning.

I'm ever so much better, and the jackdaw has come. But why wasn't I there to meet his

pathetic desire for art knowledge ? To think of that poor bird's genius and love of scarlet ribbons, shut up in a cage ! What it might have come to !

If ever my St. George's schools come to any perfection, they shall have every one a jack-daw to give the children their first lessons in arithmetic. I'm sure he could do it perfectly. "Now, Jack, take two from four, and show them how many are left." "Now, Jack, if you take the teaspoon out of this saucer, and put it into *that*, and then if you take two teaspoons out of two saucers, and put them into this, and then if you take one teaspoon out of this, and put it into that, how many spoons are there in this, and how many in that ?"—and so on.

Oh, Susie, when we *do* get old, you and I, won't we have nice schools for the birds first, and then for the children ?

That photograph is indeed like a visit ; how thankful I am that it is still my hope to get the real visit some day !

I was yesterday, and am always, certainly at present, very unwell, and a mere trouble to my Joanies and Susies and all who care for

me. But I'm painting another bit of moss which I think Susie will enjoy, and hope for better times.

Did you see the white cloud that stayed quiet for three hours this morning over the Old Man's summit? It was one of the few remains of the heaven one used to see. The heaven one had a Father in, not a raging enemy.

I send you Rogers' "Italy," that is no more. I do think you'll have pleasure in it.

I've been made so miserable by a paper of Sir J. Lubbock's on flowers and insects, that I must come and whine to you. He says, and really as if he knew it, that insects, chiefly bees, entirely originate flowers; that all scent, colour, pretty form, is owing to bees; that flowers which insects don't take care of, have no scent, colour, nor honey.

It seems to me, that it is likelier that the flowers which have no scent, colour, nor honey, don't get any attention from the bees.

But the man really knows so much about it,

and has tried so many pretty experiments, that he makes me miserable.

So I'm afraid you're miserable too. Write to tell me about it all.

It is very lovely of you to send me so sweet a note when I have not been near you since the tenth century. But it is all I can do to get my men and my moor looked after; they have both the instinct of doing what I don't want, the moment my back's turned; and then there has not been light enough to know a hawk from a hand-saw, or a crow from a ptarmigan, or a moor from a meadow. But how much better your eyes must be when you can write such lovely notes!

I don't understand how the strange cat came to love you so quickly, after one dinner and a rest by the fire! I should have thought an ill-treated and outcast animal would have regarded everything as a trap, for a month at least,—dined in tremors, warmed itself with its back to the fire, watching the door, and jumped up the chimney if you stepped on the rug.

The pheasant had come from Lachin-y-gair, with two others, which I've been eating hot,

cold, broiled, and devilled, and with your oysters for lunch. Mattie, Diddie, and Joanie have fine times of it together, they say, and that I ought to be there instead of here. Do you think so?

If you only knew the good your peacock's feathers have done me, and if you could only see the clever drawing I'm making, of one from the blue breast! You know what lovely little fern or equisetum stalks of sapphire the filaments are; they beat me so, but they're coming nice.

Joanie says she thinks you are not well; and I'm easily frightened about you, because you never take any care of yourself, and will not do what Mary or Joan or I bid you, you naughty little thing.

You won't even submit quietly to my publishing arrangements, but I'm resolved to have the book ("Frondes") remain yours altogether; you had all the trouble with it, and it will help me ever so much more than I could myself.

That is so intensely true what you say about Turner's work being like nature's in its slow-

ness and tenderness. I always think of him as a great natural force in a human frame.

So nice all you say of the "Ethics"! And I'm a monster of ingratitude, as bad as the Dragon of Wantley. Don't like Dr. Brown's friend's book at all. It's neither Scotch nor English, nor fish nor flesh, and it's tiresome.

I'm in the worst humour I've been in this month, which is saying much; and have been writing the wickedest "Fors" I ever wrote, which is saying more; you will be *so* angry.

I'm so very glad you will mark the bits you like, but are there not a good many here and there that you *don't* like?—I mean that sound hard or ironical. Please don't mind them. They're partly because I never count on readers who will really care for the prettiest things, and it gets me into a bad habit of expressing contempt which is not indeed any natural part of my mind.

It pleases me especially that you have read "The Queen of the Air." As far as I know, myself, of my books, it is the most useful and careful piece I have done. But that again—

did it not shock you to have a heathen goddess so much believed in ? (I've believed in English ones long ago). If you can really forgive me for "The Queen of the Air," there are all sorts of things I shall come begging you to read some day.

21st July.

I'm always looking at the Thwaite, and thinking how nice it is that you are there. I think it's a little nice, too, that I'm within sight of you, for if I hadn't broken, I don't know how many not exactly promises, but nearly, to be back at Oxford by this time, I might have been dragged from Oxford to London, from London to France, from France who knows where ? But I'm here, and settled to produce, as soon as possible, the following works---

1. New number of "Love's Meinie," on the Stormy Petrel.

2. New ditto of "Proserpina," on sap, pith, and bark.

3. New ditto of "Deucalion," on clouds.

4. New "Fors," on new varieties of young ladies.

5. Two new numbers of "Our Fathers," on

Brunehaut, and Bertha her niece, and St. Augustine and St. Benedict.

6. Index and epilogue to four Oxford lectures.

7. Report and account of St. George's Guild.

And I've had to turn everything out of every shelf in the house, for mildew and moths.

And I want to paint a little bank of strawberry leaves.

And I've to get a year's dead sticks out of the wood, and see to the new oat field on the moor, and prepare lectures for October!

I'm *so* idle. I look at the hills out of bed, and at the pictures off the sofa. Let us *both* be useless beings; let us be butterflies, grasshoppers, lambs, larks, anything for an easy life. I'm quite horrified to see, now that these two have come back, what a lot of books I've written, and how cruel I've been to myself and everybody else who ever has to read them. I'm too sleepy to finish this note.

13th June.

I do not know when I have received, or how I *could* receive so great an encouragement in all my work, as I do in hearing that you, after

all your long love and watchfulness of flowers, have yet gained pleasure and insight from "Proserpina" as to leaf structure. The examples you send me are indeed admirable. Can you tell me the exact name of the plant, that I may quote it?

Yes, and the weather also is a great blessing to me—so lovely this morning.

I have been simply ashamed to write without being able to say I was coming; and this naughty Joanie has put us all two months behindhand, and now Brantwood still seems as far away as at Florence. (It never really seems far away, anywhere.)

But you will like to know that I'm very well, and extremely good, and writing beautiful new notes to "Modern Painters," and getting on with "Our Fathers." And what lovely accounts I have of "Frondees" from Allen.

I really think *that* one book has made all our business lively.

And I'm so delighted with the new brooch—the one Mary gave to Joan. I never saw a

more lovely pearl in any queen's treasury, nor more exquisite setting. Joan and I have no end of pleasure in playing with it, and I vainly try to summon philosophy enough to convince either her or myself, that dew is better than pearls and moss than emeralds.

I think my days of philosophy must be over. I certainly shall not have enough to console me, if I don't get to Brantwood soon. The fog here is perpetual, and I can only see, and just that, where the edge of my paper is leaving me still room to say how lovingly and faithfully I am

Yours, etc.

You won't refuse to give house room or even parlour room again to the *first* volume of your "Stones." It has your name in it and feather sketches, which *I* like the memory of doing, and I found another in my stores to make up the set. I have to-day, regretfully, but in proud satisfaction, sent to Mr. Brown's friend Miss Lawley. You will be thinking I'm never going to write any *new* books more, I've promised so long and done nothing. But

No. 2 and No. 4 of "Amiens" have been going on at once, and No. 3 and No. 4 of "Love's Meinie," and No. 7 of "Proserpina" had to be done in the middle of all four, like the stamens in a tormentilla. And now my total tormentilla is all but out. But "all-but" is a long, long word with my printers and me. Still something has been done every day, and not ill done lately; and Joanie tells me your friends enjoyed their little visit, as I did seeing them. And Joanie is well, and literally as busy as a bee, and sometimes tumbles down at last on the sofa just at bedtime, like the rather bumbly bees in the grass when they've been too busy. And I'm pretty well, and asking young ladies to come and see me.

I'm getting steadily better, and breathing the sunshine a little again in soul and lips. But I always feel so naughty after having had morning prayers, and that the whole house is a sort of little Bethel that I've no business in.

I'm reading history of early saints too, for my Amiens book, and feel that I ought to be

scratched, or starved, or boiled, or something unpleasant, and I don't know if I'm a saint or a sinner in the least, in mediæval language. How did saints feel themselves, I wonder, about their saintship!

It is *such* a joy to hear that you enjoy anything of mine, and a double joy to have your sympathy in my love of those Italians. How I wish there were more like you! What a happy world it would be if a quarter of the people in it cared a quarter as much as you and I do, for what is good and true!

That Nativity is the deepest of all. It is by the master of Botticelli, you know; and whatever is most sweet and tender in Botticelli he owes to Lippi.

But, do you know, I quite forget about Cordelia, and where I said it! please keep it till I come. I hope to be across to see you to-morrow.

They've been doing photographs of me again, and I'm an orang-outang as usual, and am in despair. I thought with my beard I was beginning to be just the least bit nice to look

at. I would give up half my books for a new profile.

What a lovely day since twelve o'clock ! I never saw the lake shore more heavenly.

I am very thankful that you like this St. Mark's so much, and do not feel as if I had lost power of mind. I think the illness has told on me more in laziness than foolishness. I feel as if there was as much *in* me as ever, but it is too much trouble to say it. And I find myself reconciled to staying in bed of a morning to a quite woeful extent. I have not been affected so much by melancholy, being very thankful to be still alive, and to be able to give pleasure to some people,—foolish little Joanies and Susies, and so on.

You have greatly helped me by this dear little note. And the bread's all right, brown again, and I'm ready for asparagus of any stoutness, there ! Are you content ? But my new asparagus is quite *visible* this year, though how much would be wanted for a dish I don't venture to count, but must be congratulated on its definitely stalky appearance.

I was over the water this morning on school committee. How bad I have been to let those poor children be tormented as they are all this time! I'm going to try and stop all the spelling and counting and catechising, and teach them only—to watch and pray.

The oranges make me think I'm in a castle in Spain!

Your letters always warm me a little, not with laughing, but with the soft glow of life, for I live mostly with "la mort dans l'ame." (It is curious that the French, whom one thinks of as slight and frivolous, have this true and deep expression for the forms of sorrow that kill, as opposed to those that discipline and strengthen.) And your words and thought just soften and warm like west wind.

It is nice being able to please you with what I'm writing, and that you can tell people I'm not so horrid.

Here's the "Fors" you saw the proof of, but *this* isn't quite right yet.

The Willy* quotations are very delightful.

* Shakespeare.

Do you know that naughty "Cowley" at all? There's all kind of honey and strawberries in him.

It is bitter cold here these last days. I don't stir out, but must this afternoon. I've to go out to dinner and work at the Arundel Society. And if you only knew what was in my thoughts you would be *so* sorry for me, that I can't tell you.

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD.

What a sad little letter! written in that returned darkness. How can *you* ever be sad, looking forward to eternal life with all whom you love, and God over all.

It is only so far as I lose hold of that hope, that anything is ever a trial to me. But I can't think how I'm to get on in a world with no Venice in it.

You were quite right in thinking I would have nothing to do with lawyers. Not one of them shall ever have so much as a crooked sixpence of mine, to save him from being hanged, or to save the Lakes from being filled up. But I really hope there may be feeling

enough in Parliament to do a right thing without being deafened with lawyers' slang.

I have never thanked you for the snowdrops. They bloomed here beautifully for four days. Then I had to leave them to go and lecture in London. It was nice to see them, but my whole mind is set on finding whether there is a country where the flowers do not fade. Else there is no spring for me. People liked the lecture, and so many more wanted to come than could get in, that I had to promise to give another.

Here's your little note first of all. And if you only knew how my wristbands are plaguing me you'd be very sorry. They're too much starched, and *would* come down like mittens; and now I've turned them up, they're just like two horrid china cups upside down, inside my coat, and I'm afraid to write for fear of breaking them. And I've a week's work on the table, to be done before one o'clock, on pain of uproar from my friends, execution from my enemies, reproach from my lovers, triumph from my haters, despair of Joanie,

and—what from Susie? I've had such a bad night, too; woke at half-past three and have done a day's work since then—composing my lecture for March, and thinking what's to become of a godson of mine whose——

Well, never mind. I needn't give *you* the trouble, poor little Susie, of thinking too. I wonder if that jackdaw story will come to-day.

This must be folded up and directed all right at once, or I'm sure it will never go. Love to Mary, very much, please, and three times over; I missed these two last times.

I'm going to Oxford to-day (D.V.), really quite well, and rather merry. I went to the circus with my new pet, and saw lovely riding and ball play; and my pet said the only drawback to it all, was that she couldn't sit on both sides of me. And then I went home to tea with her, and gave mamma, who is Evangelical, a beautiful lecture on the piety of dramatic entertainments, which made her laugh whether she would or no; and then I had my Christmas dinner in advance with

Joanie and Arfie and Stacy Marks, and his wife and two pretty daughters, and I had six kisses—two for Christmas, two for New Year's Day, and two for Twelfth Night—and everybody was in the best humour with everybody else. And now my room is ankle deep in unanswered letters, mostly on business, and I'm going to shovel them up and tie them in a parcel labelled "Needing particular attention"; and then that will be put into a cupboard in Oxford, and I shall feel that everything's been done in a business-like way.

That badger's beautiful. I don't think there's any need for such beasts as *that* to turn Christians.

I am indeed most thankful you are well again, though I never looked on that deafness very seriously; but if you *like* hearing watches tick, and boots creak, and plates clatter, so be it to you, for many and many a year to come. I think I should *so* like to be deaf, mostly, not expected to answer anybody in society, never startled by a bang, never tortured by a rail-

road whistle, never hearing the nasty cicadas in Italy, nor a child cry, nor an owl. Nothing but a nice whisper into my ear, by a pretty girl. Ah well, I'm very glad I can chatter to you with my weak voice, to my heart's content; and you must come and see me soon now. All that you say of "Proserpina" is joyful to me. What a Susie you are, drawing like that! and I'm sure you know Latin better than I do.

I am better, but not right yet. There is no fear of sore throat, I think, but some of prolonged tooth worry. It is more stomachic than coldic, I believe, and those tea cakes are too crisply seductive! What *can* it be, that subtle treachery that lurks in tea cakes, and is wholly absent in the rude honesty of toast?

The metaphysical effect of tea cake last night was, that I had a perilous and weary journey in a desert, in which I had to dodge hostile tribes round the corners of pyramids.

A very sad letter from Joanie tells me she was going to Scotland last night, at which I am not only very sorry but very cross.

A chirping cricket on the hearth advises me

to keep my heart up. Foolish hedgehog, not to come for that egg. Don't let Abigail be cast down about her tea cakes. An "honest" egg is just as destructive of my peace of mind.

Your happy letters (with the sympathetic misery of complaint of dark days) have cheered me as much as anything could do.

The sight of one of my poor "Companions of St. George," who has sent me, not a widow's but a parlour-maid's (an old schoolmistress) "all her living," and whom I found last night, dying, slowly and quietly, in a damp room, just the size of your study (which her landlord won't mend the roof of), by the light of a single tallow candle—dying, I say, *slowly*, of consumption, not yet near the end, but contemplating it with sorrow, mixed partly with fear, lest she should not have done all she could for her children!

The sight of all this and my own shameful comforts, three wax candles and blazing fire and dry roof, and Susie and Joanie for friends!

Oh me, Susie, what *is* to become of me in

the next world, who have in this life all my good things !

What a sweet, careful, tender letter this is ! I re-enclose it at once for fear of mischief, though I've scarcely read, for indeed my eyes are weary, but I see what gentle mind it means.

Yes, you will love and rejoice in your Chaucer more and more. Fancy, I've never time, now, to look at him,—obliged to read even my Homer and Shakespeare at a scramble, half missing the sense,—the business of life disturbs one so.

Will you please thank Miss Watson for the "Queen's Wake." I should like to tell her about Hogg's visit to Herne Hill, and my dog Dash's reception of him ; but I'm never pleased with the Shepherd's bearing to Sir W. Scott, as one reads it in "Lockhart."

There's no fear of Susie's notes ever being less bright as long as she remains a child, and it's a long while yet to look forward to.

I had such a nice dinner all alone with Joanie yesterday, and Sarah waiting. Joanie

coughed and startled me. I accused her of having a cold. To defend herself she said (the mockery), Perhaps she oughtn't to kiss me. I said, "Couldn't Sarah* try first, and see if any harm comes of it?" (Sarah highly amused.) For goodness' sake don't tell Kate.

I've only a crushed bit of paper to express my crushed heart upon. It's the best!

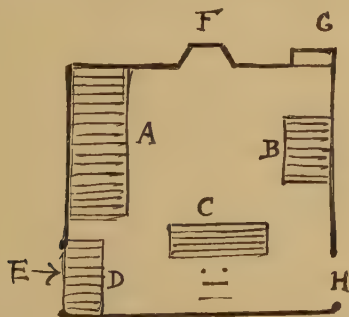
That *you* should be thinking, designing, undermining, as Mrs. Somebody says in that disgusting "Mill on the Floss," to send to London for port. And *my* port getting crusty, dusty, cobwebby, and generally like its master, just because it's no use to nobody. *I* don't drink it; Joan don't; Arfie's always stuck up with his claret and French vinegaret things (gave him all his rheumatism, *I* say); and now here's my Susie sending to London, and passing me by and my sorrowful bin. I didn't think she'd have bin and done it! Even the Alpine plants of which I hear, as darlings, don't at present console me.

Just you try such a trick again, that's all!

* Our Herne Hill parlour-maid for four years. One of quite the brightest and handsomest types of English beauty I ever saw, either in life, or fancied in painting.

HERNE HILL.

Here's your letter first thing in the morning, while I'm sipping my coffee in the midst of such confusion as I've not often achieved at my best. The little room, which I think is as nearly as possible the size of your study, but with a lower roof, has to begin with—A, my bed ; B, my basin stand ; C, my table ;



D, my chest of drawers ; thus arranged in relation to E, the window (which has still its dark bars to prevent the little boy getting out) ; F, the fireplace ; G, the golden or mineralogical cupboard ; and H, the grand entrance. The two dots with a back represent my chair, which is properly solid and not *un*-easy. Three others of lighter

disposition find place somewhere about. These with the chimney-piece and drawer's head are covered, or rather heaped, with all they can carry, and the morning is just looking in, astonished to see what is expected of it, and smiling—(yes, I may fairly say it is smiling, for it is cloudless for its part above the smoke of the horizon line)—at Sarah's hope and mine, of ever getting that room into order by twelve o'clock. The chimney-piece with its bottles, spoons, lozenge boxes, matches, candlesticks, and letters jammed behind them, does appear to me entirely hopeless, and this the more because Sarah, when I tell her to take a bottle away that has a mixture in it which I don't like, looks me full in the face, and says "she *won't*, because I may want it." I submit, because it is so nice to get Sarah to look one full in the face. She really is the prettiest, round faced, and round eyed girl I ever saw, and it's a great shame she should be a housemaid; only I wish she would take those bottles away. She says I'm looking better to-day, and I think I'm feeling a little bit more,—no, I mean, a little bit less demoniacal. But I still can do that jackdaw beautifully.

I am quite sure you would have felt like Albert Dürer, had you gone on painting wrens.

The way Nature and Heaven waste the gifts and souls they give and make, passes all wonder. You might have done anything you chose, only you were too modest.

No, I never *will* call you my dear lady ; certainly, if it comes to that, something too dreadful will follow.

That is so very nice, isn't it, about the poor invalid and "Frondes." It is terrible that doctors should say such things, but on the whole when they feel them strongly, they should speak, else it would be impossible for them to give trustworthy comfort and healing hope.

I wish that peacock of yours would teach me to brush *my* hair before I come to dinner, for I am, though

Ever your loving

J. R.,

not fit to be seen lately, with fighting midges in my hair.

I am most interested in your criticism of "Queen Mary." I have not read it, but the choice of subject is entirely morbid and wrong, and I am sure all you say must be true. The form of decline which always comes on mental power of Tennyson's passionately sensual character, is always of seeing ugly things, a kind of delirium tremens. Turner had it fatally in his last years.

I am so glad you enjoy writing to me more than any one else. The book you sent me of Dr. John Brown's on books, has been of extreme utility to me, and contains matter of the deepest interest. Did you read it yourself? If not I must lend it to you.

I am so glad also to know of your happiness in Chaucer. Don't hurry in reading. I will get you an edition for your own, that you may mark it in peace.

I send you two books, neither I fear very amusing, but on my word, I think books are always dull when one really most wants them. No, other people don't feel it as you and I do, nor do the dogs and ponies, but oughtn't we

to be thankful that we *do* feel it. The thing I fancy we are both wanting in, is a right power of enjoying the past. What sunshine there *has* been even in this sad year! I have seen beauty enough in one afternoon, not a fortnight ago, to last me for a year if I could rejoice in memory.

But I believe things are a little better at Seascale. Arfie's gone off there, but I have a painter friend, Mr. Goodwin, coming to keep me company, and I'm a little content in this worst of rainy days, in hopes there *may* be now some clearing for him.

Our little kittens pass the days of their youth up against the wall at the back of the house, where the heat of the oven comes through. What an existence! and yet with all my indoor advantages

I am your sorrowful and repining

J. R.

I am entirely grateful for your letter, and for all the sweet feelings expressed in it, and am entirely reverent of the sorrow which you feel at my speaking thus. If only all were like you. But the chief sins and evils of the

day are caused by the Pharisees, exactly as in the time of Christ, and "they make broad their phylacteries" in the same way, the Bible superstitiously read, becoming the authority for every error and heresy and cruelty. To make its readers understand that the God of their own day is as living, and as able to speak to them directly as ever in the days of Isaiah and St. John, and that He would now send messages to His Seven Churches, if the Churches would hear, needs stronger words than any I have yet dared to use, against the idolatry of the historical record of His messages long ago, perverted by men's forgetfulness, and confused by mischance and misapprehension; and if instead of the Latin form "Scripture" we put always "writing" instead of "written" or "write" in one place, and "Scripture," as if it meant our English Bible, in another, it would make such a difference to our natural and easy understanding the range of texts.

The peacock's feathers are marvellous. I am very glad to see them. I never had any of their downy ones before. My compliments to the bird, upon them please.

I have had a tiring forenoon in the house with dark air, and must go out ; and poor Susie will not only scarce find a turned leaf but an empty line in the unturned one.

But children always like to have letters about anything.

I found a strawberry growing just to please itself, as red as a ruby, high up on Yewdale crag yesterday, in a little corner of rock all its own ; so I left it to enjoy itself. It seemed as happy as a lamb, and no more meant to be eaten.

Yes, those are all sweetest bits from Chaucer (the pine new to me) ; your own copy is being bound. And all the Richard,—but you must not copy out the Richard bits, for I like all my Richard alike from beginning to end. Yes, my “seed pearl” bit is pretty, I admit ; it was like the thing. The cascades here, I’m afraid, come down more like seed oatmeal.

Now it’s very naughty of you, Susie, to think everybody else would have ate that strawberry. Mr. Severn and Mr. Patmore were both with me ; and when *I* said, “Now, I don’t believe

three other people could be found who would let that alone," Mr. Patmore was quite shocked, and said, "I'm quite sure nobody but *you* would have thought of eating it!"

Ever your loving, gormandising (Patmore knows me !)

J. R.

Actually I've never thanked you for that exquisite cheese. The mere look of it puts one in heart like a fresh field. I never tasted anything so perfect in its purity of cream nature. The Chaucer bits, next to the cheese, are delicious, too.

About the railroad circular, I knew and know nothing but that I signed my name. They may have printed said circular perhaps.

At all events, most thankful should I be to any one who would help in such cause. I'm at work on a piece of moss again, far better, I hope likely to be, than the one you saw.

I believe in my hasty answer to your first kind letter I never noticed what you said about Aristophanes. If you will indeed send me some notes of the passages that interest you

in the "Birds," it will not only be very pleasant to me, but quite seriously useful, for the "Birds" have always been to me so mysterious in that comedy, that I have never got the good of it which I know is to be had. The careful study of it put off from day to day, was likely enough to fall into the great region of my despair, unless you had chanced thus to remind me of it.

Please, if another chance of good to me come in your way, in another brown spotty-purple peacock's feather, will you yet send it to me, and I will be always your most grateful and faithful

J. R.

HERNE HILL.

It is so very sweet and good of you to write such lovely play letters to Joanie and me; they delight and comfort us more than I can tell you.

What translation of Aristophanes is that? I must get it. I've lost I can't tell you how much knowledge and power through false pride in refusing to read translations, though I couldn't read the original without more trouble and time than I could spare; nevertheless, you must not

think this English gives you a true idea of the original. The English is much more "English" in its temper than its words. Aristophanes is far more dry, severe, and concentrated ; his words are fewer, and have fuller flavour ; this English is to him what currant jelly is to currants. But it's immensely useful to me.

Yes, that is very sweet about the kissing. I have done it to rocks often, seldom to flowers, not being sure that they would like it.

I recollect giving a very reverent little kiss to a young sapling that was behaving beautifully in an awkward chink, between two great big ones that were ill-treating it. Poor me, (I'm old enough, I hope, to write grammar my own way), my own little self, meantime, never by any chance got a kiss when I wanted it,—and the better I behaved, the less chance I had, it seemed.

I never thought the large packet was from you ; it was thrown aside with the rest, till evening, and only opened *then* by chance. I was greatly grieved to find what I had thus left unacknowledged. The drawings are en-

tirely beautiful and wonderful, but, like all the good work done in those bygone days, (Donovan's own book being of inestimable excellence in this kind,) they affect me with profound melancholy in the thought of the loss to the entire body of the nation of all this perfect artistic capacity, and sweet will, for want of acknowledgment, system, and direction. I must write a careful passage on this matter in my new Elements of Drawing. Your drawings have been sent me not by you, but by my mistress Fors, for a text. It is no wonder, when you can draw like this, that you care so much for all lovely nature. But I shall be ashamed to show you my peacock's feather ; I've sent it, however.

What a naughty child you are to pick out all that was useless and leave all that's practical and useful for "Frondes" ! You ought to have pounced on all the best bits on drawing from nature !

It is *very* sweet of you to give me your book, but I accept it at once most thankfully. It is the best type I can show of the perfect

work of an English lady in her own simple peace of enjoyment and natural gift of truth, in her sight and in her mind. And many pretty things are in my mind and heart about it, if my hands were not too cold to shape words for them. The book shall be kept with my Bewicks; it is in no wise inferior to them in fineness of work. The finished proof of next "*Proserpina*" will, I think, be sent me by Saturday's post. Much more is done, but this number was hindered by the revisal of the Dean of Christ Church, which puts me at rest about mistakes in my Greek.

It is a great joy to me that *you* like the Wordsworth bits; there are worse coming (unless Diddie, perhaps, begs them off); but I've been put into a dreadful passion by two of my cleverest girl pupils "going off pious"! It's exactly like a nice pear getting "sleepy"; and I'm pretty nearly in the worst temper I *can* be in, for W. W. But what *are* these blessed feathers? Everything that's best of grass and clouds and crysophrase. What incomparable little creature wears such things,

or lets fall ! The "fringe of flame" is Carlyle's, not mine, but we feel so much alike, that you may often mistake one for the other now.

You cannot in the least tell what a help you are to me, in caring so much for my things and seeing what I try to do in them. You are quite one of a thousand for sympathy with everybody, and one of the ten times ten thousand, for special sympathy with my own feelings and tries. Yes, that second column is rather nicely touched, though I say it, for hands and eyes of sixty-two ; but when once the wind stops I hope to do a bit of primrosey ground that will be richer.

Here, not I, but a thing with a dozen of colds in its head, am !

I caught one cold on Wednesday last, another on Thursday, two on Friday, four on Saturday, and one at every station between this and Ingleborough on Monday. I never was in such ignoble misery of cold. I've no cough to speak of, nor anything worse than usual in the way of sneezing, but my hands

are cold, my pulse nowhere, my nose tickles and wrings me, my ears sing—like kettles, my mouth has no taste, my heart no hope of ever being good for anything, any more. I never passed such a wretched morning by my own fireside in all my days, and I've quite a fiendish pleasure in telling you all this, and thinking how miserable you'll be too. Oh me, if I ever get to feel like myself again, won't I take care of myself.

Seven of the eleven colds are better, but the other four are worse, and they were the worst before, and I'm such a wreck and rag and lump of dust being made mud of, that I'm ashamed to let the maids bring me my dinner.

Your contemptible, miserable, beyond pitiable, past deplorable

J. R.

The little book is very lovely, all of it that is your *own*. The religion of it you know is, anybody's, what my poor little Susie was told when she was a year or two younger than she is now.

What we should all try to do, is to find out something certain about God, for *ourselves*.

The feathers nearly made me fly away from all my Psalters and Exoduses, to you, and my dear peacocks. I wonder when Solomon got his ivory and apes and peacocks, whether he ever had time to look at them. He couldn't always be ordering children to be chopped in two. Alas, I suppose his wisdom, in England of to-day, would have been taxed to find out which mother lied in saying which child *wasn't* hers !

But you *will* like my psalter, I'm sure. Diddie wouldn't copy the wickedest bits, so I was obliged to leave them out !

Oh dear, I feel so wicked to-day, I could even tease *you*, by telling you Joanie was better, and how it came to pass. I mustn't say more, but that I love you ever so much, and am ever, etc.

I began this note especially to tell you how delighted I was with your idea of the flower show ; how good it will be for the people, and how nice for you !

I've been writing to Miss R. again, and Miss L.'s quite right to stay at home. "She thinks I have an eagle's eye." Well, what else should I have, in day time? together with my cat's eye in the dark? But you may tell her I should be very sorry if my eyes were *no* better than eagles'! "Doth the eagle know what is in the pit?" *I* do.

I'm only going away for Sunday, coming back on the Monday, and going to stay for a week longer. Mr. MacD. has begun a pretty drawing of the study (and really depends on my assistant criticism); and Diddie, I think, will enjoy her dinner with you to-morrow better than if I had gone for good and all; and I think I shall enjoy my Sunday at Sheffield, if I had gone for evil and all. I've turned the page to say I'm rather pleased with that trans-mutation (what a stupid thing of me to divide that stupid word) of "for good and all," mock-ingest of common phrases, even if one were going away for a honeymoon it would only be for better or worse,—or stay, perhaps it means for good and all *else*. One uses it too without

the all,—“for good” meaning that nothing that isn’t good can be eternal. I am puzzled; but I believe I’m coming back for good anyhow. And, there now, I’ve to turn the page once more, and, I was only going to say something stupid about goodbye, a word that makes me shudder from head to foot.

I’ve found another stone for you, lapis lazuli, which never fades, and is heaven colour to all time.

That you may not make a complete infidel of yourself with those insidious “Arabian Nights,” or a complete philosopher of yourself, which would be unbecoming at your age, with the “Council of Friends” I send you a Western book of a character at once prosaic, graceful, and simple, which will disenchant and refresh you at once. I will find a second volume before you have finished the first, and meanwhile you must come and *choose* the next book that is to be, out of my library, which you never condescend to look at when you’re here.

By hook or by crook, by swans and cygnets, by Carpaccio and the Queen of Sheba, I’ll come to see you, please, to-day.

I'm really not quite so bad all over, yet ; and I've written things lately with much in them that will comfort *you* for me, though I can't quite comfort myself. And I'll come often to be lectured ; and I'm not reading novels just now, but only birds and beasts.

I want to know the names of all your five cats ; they were all at the door yesterday, and I should have made six, but they ran away.

I send two of Miss Kate's books for Mary and you to keep as long as you choose. Miss Arnold is coming to-morrow, but I hope to get to the Thwaite at half-past twelve. Only my morning goes just now like the flash of a Christmas cracker.

I'm better ; I trust you are ! It *is* a day at last ; and the flowers are all off their heads for joy. I've been writing some pretty things too, and thinking naughty ones, as I do when I'm pretty well.

But I've lost my voice and can't sing them !

Yes, of course keep that book, any time you like ; but I think you'll find *most* of it unread-

able. If you *do* get through it, you'll have to tell me all about it, you know, for *I've* never read a word of it except just the plums here and there.

Publishers *are* brutes, and always spoil one's books, and then say it's *our* fault if they don't sell !

Yes, that is a lovely description of a picture. All the same I believe the picture itself was merely modern sensationalism.

They can't do without death nowadays, not because they want to know how to die, but because they're too stupid to live.

I hope you will be comforted in any feeling of languor or depression in yourself by hearing that I also am wholly lack lustrous, *depressed*, *oppressed*, *compressed*, and *downpressed* by a quite countless pressgang of despondencies, humiliaties, remorses, shamefacednesses, all overnesses, all undernesses, sicknesses, dulnesses, darknesses, sulkinesses, and everything that rhymes to lessness and distress, and that I'm sure you and I are at present the mere targets of the darts of the—, etc., etc., and Mattie's

waiting and mustn't be loaded with more sorrow ; but I can't tell you how sorry I am to break my promise to-day, but it would not be safe for me to come.

I'll look at the dial to-night. What a cruel thing of you to make *me* " look upon it " ! I'm not gone to Venice yet, but thinking of it hourly. I'm very nearly done with toasting my bishop ; he just wants another turn or two, and then a little butter.

I'm a little better, but can't laugh much yet, and won't cry if I can help it. Yet it always makes me *nearly* cry, to hear of those poor working men trying to express themselves and nobody ever teaching them, nor anybody in all England, knowing that painting is an *art*, and sculpture also, and that an untaught man can no more carve or paint, than play the fiddle. All efforts of the kind, mean simply that we have neither master nor scholars in any rank or any place. And I, also, what have *I* done for Coniston schools yet ? I don't deserve an oyster shell, farless an oyster.

KIRBY LONSDALE,

Thursday evening.

You won't get this *noté* to-morrow, I'm afraid, but after that I think they will be regular till I reach Oxford. It is very nice to know that there is someone who does care for a letter, as if she were one's sister. You would be glad to see the clouds break for me; and I had indeed a very lovely morning drive and still lovelier evening, and full moonrise here over the Lune.

I suppose it is Kirk-by-Lune's Dale? for the church, I find, is a very important Norman relic. By the way, I should tell you, that the *coloured* plates in the "Stones of Venice" do great injustice to my drawings; the patches are worn on the stones. My *drawings* were not *good*, but the plates are total failures. The only one even of the engravings which is rightly done is the (*last*, I think, in Appendix) inlaid dove and raven. I'll show you the drawing for that when I come back, and perhaps for the San Michele, if I recollect to fetch it from Oxford, and I'll fetch you the second volume, which has really good plates. That blue beginning, I forgot to say, is of the

Straits of Messina, and it is really *very* like the colour of the sea.

That is intensely curious about the parasitical plant of Borneo. But—very dreadful!

You are like Timon of Athens, and I'm like one of his parasites. The oranges are delicious, the brown bread dainty; what the melon is going to be I have no imagination to tell. But, oh me, I had such a lovely letter from Dr. John, sent me from Joan this morning, and I've lost it. It said, "Is Susie as good as her letters? If so, she must be better. Whât freshness of enjoyment in everything she says!"

Alas! not in everything she feels in *this* weather, I fear. Was ever anything so awful?

Do you know, Susie, everything that has happened to me (and the leaf I sent you this morning may show you it has had some hurting in it) is *little* in comparison to the crushing and depressing effect on me, of what I learn day by day as I work on, of the cruelty and ghastliness of the *nature* I used to think so Divine? But, I get out of it by remembering,

This is but a crumb of dust we call the "world," and a moment of eternity which we call "time." Can't answer the great question to-night.

I can only thank you for telling me ; and say, Praised be God for giving him back to us.

Worldly people say "Thank God" when they get what they want ; as if it amused God to plague them, and was a vast piece of self-denial on His part to give them what they liked. But I, who am a simple person, thank God when He hurts me, because I don't think He likes it any more than I do ; but I can't *praise* Him, because—I don't understand why—I can only praise what's pretty and pleasant, like getting back our doctor.

26th November.

And to-morrow I'm not to be there ; and I've no present for you, and I am so sorry for both of us ; but oh, my dear little Susie, the good people all say this wretched makeshift of a world is coming to an end next year, and you and I and everybody who likes birds and

roses are to have new birthdays and presents of such sugar plums. Crystals of candied cloud and manna in sticks with no ends, all the way to the sun, and white stones ; and new names in them, and heaven knows what besides.

It sounds all too good to be true ; but the good people are positive of it, and so's the great Pyramid, and the Book of Daniel, and the "Bible of Amiens." You can't possibly believe in any more promises of mine, I know, but if I *do* come to see you this day week, don't think it's a ghost ; and believe at least that we all love you and rejoice in your birthday wherever we are.

I'm so thankful you're better.

Reading my old diary, I came on a sentence of yours last year about the clouds being all "trimmed with swansdown," *so* pretty. (I copied it out of a letter.) The thoughts of you always trim *me* with swansdown.

I never got your note written yesterday ; meant at least to do it even after post time, but was too stupid, and am infinitely so to-day

also. Only I *must* pray you to tell Sarah we all had elder wine to finish our evening with, and I mulled it myself, and poured it out in the saucepan into the expectants' glasses, and everybody asked for more ; and I slept like a dormouse. But, as I said, I am so stupid this morning that ——. Well, there's no "that" able to say how stupid I am, unless the fly that wouldn't keep out of the candle last night ; and *he* had some notion of bliss to be found in candles, and I've no notion of anything.

The blue sky is so wonderful to-day and the woods after the rain so delicious for walking in that I must still delay any school talk one day more. Meantime I've sent you a book which is in a nice large print, and may in some parts interest you. I got it that I might be able to see Scott's material for "Peveril"; and it seems to me that he might have made more of the real attack on Latham House than of the fictitious one on Front de Boeuf's castle, had he been so minded, but perhaps he felt himself hampered by too much known fact.

I've just finished and sent off the index to "Deucalion," first volume, and didn't feel inclined for more schooling to-day.

I've just had a charming message from Martha Gale under the address of "that old duckling." Isn't that nice? Ethel was coming to see you to-day, but I've confiscated her for the woodcock, and she shan't come to-morrow, for I want you all to myself; only it isn't *her* fault.

But you gave my present before, a month ago, and I've been presenting myself with all sorts of things ever since; and now it's not half gone. I'm very thankful for this however, just now, for St. George, who is cramped in his career, and I'll accept it if you like for *him*. Meantime I've sent it to the bank, and hold him your debtor. I've had the most delicious gift besides, I ever had in my life,—the Patriarch of Venice's blessing written with his own hand, with his portrait.

I'll bring you this to see to-morrow, and a fresh Turner.

I have forbidden Joanie's going out to-day,

for she got a little chill in the wind last night, and looked pale and *defaite* in the evening; she's all right again, but I can't risk her out, though she was much minded to come, and I am sure you and Mary will say I am right. She will be delighted and refreshed by seeing the young ladies; and the Turners look grand in the grey light.

So I have told Baxter to bring up a fly from the Waterhead, and to secure your guests on their way here, and put up to bring them so far back. I shall also send back by it a purple bit of Venice, which pleases me, though the mount's too large and spoils it a little; but you will be gracious to it.

What delicious asparagus and brown bread I've been having!!!!!! I should like to write as many notes of admiration as there are waves on the lake; the octave must do. I've been writing a pretty bit of chant for Byron's heroic measure. Joan must play it to you when she next comes. I'm mighty well, and rather mischievous.

The weather has grievously depressed me

this last week, and I have not been fit to speak to anybody. I had much interruption in the early part of it though, from a pleasant visitor ; and I have not been able to look rightly at your pretty little book. Nevertheless, I'm quite sure your strength is in private letter writing, and that a curious kind of shyness prevents your doing yourself justice in print. You might also surely have found a more pregnant motto about birds' nests !

Am not I cross ? But these grey skies are mere poison to my thoughts, and I have been writing such letters, that I don't think many of my friends are likely to speak to me again.

I think you must have been spinning the sunbeams into gold to be able to scatter gifts like this.

It is your own light of the eyes that has made the woodland leaves so golden brown.

Well, I have just opened a St. George account at the Coniston Bank, and this will make me grandly miserly and careful.

I am very thankful for it.

Also for Harry's saying of me that I am

gentle ! I've been quarrelling with so many people lately, I had forgotten all grace, till you brought it back yesterday and made me still your gentle, etc.

SUSIE'S LETTERS.

SUSIE'S LETTERS.

THE following Letters and the little Notes on Birds are inserted here by the express wish of Mr. Ruskin. I had it in my mind to pay Susie some extremely fine compliments about these Letters and Notes, and to compare her method of observation with Thoreau's, and above all, to tell some very pretty stories showing her St. Francis-like sympathy with, and gentle power over, all living creatures; but Susie says that she is already far too prominent, and we hope that the readers of "Hortus" will see for themselves how she reverences and cherishes all noble life, with a special tenderness, I think, for furred and feathered creatures. To all outcast and hungry things the Thwaite is a veritable Bethlehem, or House of Bread, and to her, their sweet "Madonna Nourrice," no less than to her Teacher, the sparrows and linnets that crowd its thresholds are in a very particular sense "Sons of God."

A. F.

April 14th, 1874.

I sent off such a long letter to you yesterday, my dear friend. Did you think of your own quotation from Homer, when you told me that field of yours was full of violets? But where are the four fountains of *white* water?—through a meadow full of violets and parsley? How delicious Calypso's fire of finely chopped cedar! How shall I thank you for allowing *me*, Susie the little, to *distil* your writings? Such a joy and comfort to me—for I shall need much very soon now. I do so thank and love you for it; I am sure I may say so to *you*. I rejoice again and again that I have such a friend. May I never love him less, never prove unworthy of his friendship! How I wanted my letter, and now it has come, and I have told our Dr. John of your safe progress so far. I trust you will be kept safe from *everything* that might injure you in any way.

The snow has melted away, and this is a really sweet April day and *ought* to be enjoyed—if only Susie *could*. But both she and her dear friend must strive with their grief. When I was a girl—(I was once)—I used to delight

in Pope's Homer. I do believe I rather enjoyed the killing and slaying, specially the splitting down the *chine* ! But when I tried to read it again not *very* long ago, I got tired of this kind of thing. If *you* had only translated Homer ! then I should have had a feast. When a schoolgirl, going each day with my bag of books into Manchester, I used to like Don Quixote and Sir Charles Grandison with my milk porridge. I must send you only this short letter to-day. I can see your violet field from this window. How sweetly the little limpid stream would *tinkle* to-day ; and how the primroses are sitting listening to it and the little birds sipping it ! I have come to the conclusion that bees go more by *sight* than by scent. As I stand by my peacock with his gloriously gorgeous tail all spread out, a bee comes *right at it* (very vulgar, but expressive) ; and I have an Alpine Primula on this window stone brightly in flower, and a bee came and alighted, but went away again at once, not finding the expected honey. I wonder what you do the livelong day, for I know you and idleness are not acquaintances. I am so sorry your favourite places are spoiled. But dear

Brantwood will grow prettier and prettier under your care.

April 9th.

I have just been pleased by seeing a black-bird enjoying with schoolboy appetite, portions of a moistened crust of bread which I threw out for him and his fellow-creatures. How he dug with his orange bill!—even more orange than usual perhaps at this season of the year. At length the robins have built a nest in the ivy in our yard—a very secure and sheltered place, and a very convenient distance from the crumb market. Like the old woman, *he* sings with a merry devotion, and *she* thinks there never was such music, as she sits upon her eggs; he comes again and again, with every little dainty that his limited income allows, and *she* thinks it all the sweeter because *he* brings it to her. Now and then she leaves her nest to stretch her wings, and to shake off the dust of care, and to prevent her pretty *ankles* being cramped. But she knows her duty too well to remain absent long from her precious eggs.

Now another little note from Dr. John, and he actually begins, "My dear 'Susie,'"—and

ends, "Let me hear from you soon. Ever yours affectionately." Also he says, "It is very kind in you to let me get at once close to you." The rest of his short letter (like you, he was busy) is nearly all about *you*, so of course it is interesting to *me*, and he hopes you are already getting good from the change, and I indulge the same hope.

10th April.

Brantwood looked so very nice this morning decorated by the coming into leaf of the larches. I wish you could have seen them in the distance as I did : the early sunshine had glanced upon them lighting up one side, and leaving the other in softest shade, and the tender green contrasted with the deep browns, and grays stood out in a wonderful way, and the trees looked like spirits of the wood, which you might think would melt away like the White Lady of Avenel.

Dear sweet April still looks coldly upon us—the month you love so dearly. Little white lambs are in the fields now, and so much that is sweet is coming ; but there is a shadow over

this house *now* ; and also, my dear kind friend is far away. The horse-chestnuts have thrown away the winter coverings of their buds, and given them to that dear economical mother earth, who makes such good use of everything, and works up old materials again in a wonderful way, and is delightfully unlike most economists,—the very soul of generous liberality. Now some of your own words, so powerful as they are,—you are speaking of the Alp and of the “Great Builder”—of your own transientness, as of the grass upon its sides ; and in this very sadness, a sense of strange companionship with past generations, in seeing what they saw. They have ceased to look upon it, you will soon cease to look also ; and the granite wall will be for others, etc., etc.

My dear friend, was there ever any one so pathetic as you ? And you have the power of bringing things before one, both to the eye and to the mind : you do indeed paint with your pen. Now I have a photograph of you—not a very satisfactory one, but still I am glad to have it, rather than none. It was done at Newcastle-on-Tyne. Were you in search of something of Bewick’s ?

I have just given the squirrel his little *loaf*; (so you see I am a lady,)* he has bounded away with it, full of joy and gladness. I wish that this were my case and *yours*, for whatever we may wish for, that we have not. We have a variety and abundance of loaves. I have asked Dr. J. Brown whether he would like photographs of your house and the picturesque breakwater. I do so wish that you and he and I did not suffer so much, but *could* be at least moderately happy. I am sure you would be glad if you knew even in this time of sorrow, when all seems stale, flat, unprofitable, the pleasure and interest I have had in reading your Vol. 3 ["Modern Painters"]. I study your character in your writings, and I find so much to elevate, to love, to admire—a sort of education for my poor old self—and oh! such beauty of thought and word.

Even yet my birds want so much bread; I do believe the worms are sealed up in the dry earth, and they have many little mouths to fill

* See "Fors Clavigera," Letter XLV., p. 212.

just now—and there is one old blackbird whose devotion to his wife and children is lovely. I should like him never to die, he is *one* of my heroes. And now a dog which calls upon me sometimes at the window, and I point kitchenwards and the creature knows what I mean, and goes and gets a good meal. So if I can only make a dog happy (as you do, only you take yours to live with you, and I cannot do that) it is a pleasant thing. I do so like to make things happier, and I should like to put bunches of hay in the fields for the poor horses, for there is very scant supply of grass, and too many for the supply.

1st May.

I cannot longer refrain from writing to you, my dear kind friend, so often are you in my thoughts. Dearest Joanie has told you, I doubt not, and I know how sorry you are, and how truly you are feeling for your poor Susie. So *knowing that* I will say no more about my sorrow. There is no need for words. I am wishing, oh, so much, to know how you are :

quite safe and well, I hope, and able to have much real enjoyment in the many beautiful things by which you are surrounded. May you lay up a great stock of good health and receive much good in many ways, and then return to those who so much miss you, and by whom you are so greatly beloved.

Coniston would go into your heart if you could see it now—so very lovely, the oak trees so early, nearly in leaf already. Your beloved blue hyacinths will soon be out, and the cuckoo has come, but it is long since Susie has been out. She only stands at an open window, but she must try next week to go into the garden; and she is finding a real pleasure in making extracts from your writings *for you*, often wondering “will he let that remain?” and hoping that he will.

Do you ever send home orders about your Brantwood? I have been wishing so much that your gardener might be told to mix quantities of old mortar and soil together, and to fill many crevices in your new walls with it; then the breezes will bring fern seeds and plant them, or rather sow them in such fashion as no human being can do. When time and

the showers brought by the west wind have mellowed it a little, the tiny beginnings of mosses will be there. The sooner this can be done the better. Do not think Susie presumptuous.

We have hot sun and a *very* cool air, which I do not at all like.

I hope your visit to Palermo and your lady have been all that you could wish. Please *do* write to me ; it would do me so much good and so greatly refresh me.

This poor little letter is scarcely worth sending, only it says that I am your loving Susie.

14th May.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—Your letter yesterday did me so much good, and though I answered it at once, yet here I am again. A kind woman from the other side has sent me the loveliest group of drooping and very tender ferns, soft as of some velvet belonging to the fairies, and of the most exquisite green, and primroses, and a slender stalked white flower, and so arranged, that they continually remind me of

that enchanting group of yours in Vol. 3, which you said I might cut out. What would you have thought of me if I had? Oh, that you would and could sketch this group—or even that your eye could rest upon it! Now you will laugh if I ask you whether harpies ever increase in number? or whether they are only the “old original.” They quite torment me when I open the window, and blow chaff at me. I suppose at this moment, dearest Joanie is steaming away to Liverpool; one always wants to know now whether people accomplish a journey safely. When the blackbirds come for soaked bread, they generally eat a nice little lot themselves, before carrying any away from the window for their little ones; but Bobbie, “our little English Robin,” has just been twice, took none for himself, but carries beak-load after beak-load for his speckled infants. How curious the universal love of bread is; so many things like and eat it—even flies, and snails!

You know you inserted a letter from Jersey about fish!*

A lady there tells me that formerly you might have a bucket of oysters for sixpence,

* See “Fors Clavigera,” Letter XXX., p. 14.

and that now you can scarcely get anything but such coarse kinds of fish as are not liked ; and she has a sister, a sad invalid, to whom fish would be a very pleasant and wholesome change. This is really a sad state of things, and *here* the railways seem very likely to carry away our butter, and it is now such a price, quite ex[h]orbitant. Why did I put an *h* in ? Is it to prove the truth of what you say, that ladies do not spell well ? A letter which I once wrote when a girl was a wonderful specimen of bad spelling.

15th May.

I have found such lovely passages in Vol. 1 this morning that I am delighted, and have begun to copy one of them. You do float in such beautiful things sometimes that you make me feel I don't know how !

How I thank you for ever having written them, for though late in the day, they were written for *me*, and have at length reached me !

You are so candid about your age that I shall tell you mine ! I am astonished to find myself sixty-eight—very near the Psalmist's

threescore and ten. Much illness and much sorrow, and then I woke up to find myself *old*, and as if I had lost a great part of my life. Let us hope it was not all lost.

I think *you* can understand me when I say that I have a great fund of love, and no one to spend it upon, because there are not any to whom I could give it *fully*, and I love my pets so dearly, but I *dare not* and cannot enjoy it fully because—they *die*, or get injured, and then my misery is intense. I feel as if I could tell *you* much, because your sympathy is so refined and so tender and true. Cannot I be a sort of second mother to you? I am sure the first one was often praying for blessings for you, and in this, at least, I resemble her.

Am I tiresome writing all this? It just came, and you said I was to write what did. We have had some nice rain, but followed not by warmth, but a cruel *east* wind.

ABOUT WRENS.

This year I have seen wrens' nests in three

different kinds of places—one built in the angle of a doorway, one under a bank, and a third near the top of a raspberry bush ; this last was so large that when our gardener first saw it, he thought it was a swarm of bees. It seems a pleasure to this active bird to build ; he will begin to build several nests sometimes before he completes one for Jenny Wren to lay her eggs and make her nursery. Think how busy both he and Jenny are when the sixteen young ones come out of their shells—little helpless gaping things wanting feeding in their turns the livelong summer day ! What hundreds and thousands of small insects they devour ! they catch flies with good-sized wings. I have seen a parent wren with its beak so full that the wings stood out at each side like the whiskers of a cat.

Once in America in the month of June, a mower hung up his coat under a shed near a barn : two or three days passed before he had occasion to put it on again. Thrusting his arm up the sleeve he found it completely filled with something, and on pulling out the mass he found it to be the nest of a wren completely finished and lined with feathers. What a pity

that all the labour of the little pair had been in vain ! Great was the distress of the birds, who vehemently and angrily scolded him for destroying their house ; happily it was an empty one, without either eggs or young birds.

HISTORY OF A BLACKBIRD.

We had had one of those summer storms which so injure the beautiful flowers and the young leaves of the trees. A blackbird's nest with young ones in it was blown out of the ivy on the wall, and the little ones, with the exception of one, were killed ! The poor little bird did not escape without a wound upon his head, and when he was brought to me it did not seem very likely that I should ever be able to rear him ; but I could not refuse to take in the little helpless stranger, so I put him into a covered basket for a while.

I soon found that I had undertaken what was no easy task, for he required feeding so early in a morning that I was obliged to take him and his bread crumbs into my bed-

room, and jump up to feed him as soon as he began to chirp, which he did in very good time.

Then in the daytime I did not dare to have him in the sitting-room with me, because my sleek favourites, the cats, would soon have devoured him, so I carried him up into an attic, and as he required feeding very often in the day, you may imagine that I had quite enough of exercise in running up and down stairs.

But I was not going to neglect the helpless thing after once undertaking to nurse him, and I had the pleasure of seeing him thrive well upon his diet of dry-bread crumbs and a little scrap of raw meat occasionally; this last delicacy, you know, was a sort of imitation of worms!

Very soon my birdie knew my step, and though he never exactly said so, I am sure he thought it had "musick in't," for as soon as I touched the handle of the door he set up a shriek of joy!

"The bird that we nurse is the bird that we love," and I soon loved Dick. And the love was not all on one side, for my bonnie bird

would sit upon my finger uttering complacent little chirps, and when I sang to him in a low voice he would gently peck my hair.

As he grew on and wanted to use his limbs, I put him into a large wicker bonnet-basket, having taken out the lining; it made him a large cheerful airy cage. Of course I had a perch put across it, and he had plenty of white sand and a pan of water; sometimes I set his bath on the floor of the room, and he delighted in bathing until he looked half-drowned; then what shaking of his feathers, what *preening* and arranging there was! And how happy and clean and comfortable he looked when his toilet was completed!

You may be sure that I took him some of the first ripe currants and strawberries, for blackbirds like fruit, and so do boys! When he was fledged I let him out in the room, and so he could exercise his wings. It is a curious fact that if I went up to him with my bonnet on he did not know me at all, but was in a state of great alarm.

Blackbirds are wild birds, and do not bear being kept in a cage, not even so well as some other birds do; and as this bird grew up he

was not so tame, and was rather restless. I knew that, though I loved him so much, I ought not to keep him shut up against his will. He was carried down into the garden while the raspberries were ripe, and allowed to fly away ; and I have never seen him since. Do you wonder that my eyes filled with tears when he left ?

THE END.

